Detouring the Commute
(the art and practice of everyday travel)

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Abstract

My thesis explores the processes of gaining deep knowledge about place through everyday travel. I focus on how different modes of mobility perform different kinds of spaces, views, and mental maps of the city, how the repetition of the daily routine enacts a personal archive of place, and how the functionalistic commute can be "detoured" into a meaningful practice. My creative research stems in part from my autoethnographic media practices of navigating the city, and frames the gathering of knowledge as an artistic experience that is integral to my methods of investigation. The commute is a unique and everyday liminal space, one that is ripe for artistic encounters and stories to materialize the city in transformative ways. By explicitly advocating an interventionist practice through mapping and locative art, I hope to contribute to the development of a more engaged commute as a hybrid space of aesthetic pleasure and surprise, and a heightened awareness of the many strata that make up a place.

This project investigates three different and specific kinds of commutes. The first involves a walk between two very different neighbourhoods that involves crossing the controversial border that is the L'Acadie Fence. I use cultural landscape methods of "reading" the built environment with an eye on the material, the social and the historical, as well as a photographic practice that documents and archives my daily journeys around the two neighbourhoods. The second commute relates the experience of city transit as a unique space of performance, both in the everyday ritual sense and as a space of social theatre. The ubiquity of mobile media in transit spaces is also addressed as having the potential to reconnect to one's surroundings, rather than disconnecting from the commuting routine. Finally, the third commute describes a drive from one city to another in rush hour traffic, combined with a look at Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope as a method of cinematic analysis, and a way of discerning narratives that build up around the non-places of the auto-commute. This study will then conclude by presenting a framework for the detour as a practice of creative mapping through everyday travel.

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This is for my mother Amy Suk Han Chan.

And as always, for Joe Ollmann and Samuel Ollmann-Chan, my always.

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List of Media Works

All works listed here are by Taien Ng-Chan as part of this thesis project and can be viewed at http://soyfishmedia.com/detouringthecommute/

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Digital photo-collage.
Original dimensions: 22" x 1800"
An early version was first exhibited digitally at *Contested Site: Archives and the City*, FoFA Gallery, Montreal, 2012.

2. *City Transit*
Multi-media website featuring 19 videopoems and narrative fragments made for watching while riding city transit. Original media formats include digital cell phone video, digital camera video, Super 8 and Super 16mm film.
Produced as part of a collaborative website project, *Detours: Poetics of the City*, in residency at the artist-run centre Agence TOPO, 2012.
http://agencetopo.qc.ca/detours/

3. *Superhighway Suspense Movie*
Digital video.
Length: 6 minutes 38 seconds.
Music and soundmix by Christina Sealey.
An early version of this video was first exhibited at *Stories of the City*, curated by the In/Terminus Research Collective at the University of Windsor, in November 2015.

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Introduction

"Metro, boulot, dodo"

For many people, the parts of the city that they experience most are the ones they move through on the way to work or to school. In his "Theory of the Dérive" ([1956] 1996), Guy Debord points to Chombart de Lauwe's famous map of all the trajectories made by a Parisian student over the course of one year, to illustrate the narrowness to which one's life can sometimes be reduced. There are times when a person can become caught in the nine-to-five structures of modern society, and our daily itineraries may form similarly narrow triangles between home, work, and places of leisure and consumption. Debord expressed "indignation at the fact that there are people who live like that" (22) and although I am inclined to agree, I know also that to wander the streets in a dérive or as a flâneur is a luxury that some cannot afford. Sometimes, the daily commute is the only time that I am able to be actually out in the city, moving through it.

The commute comes in many forms, and clearly, the method of commuting impacts greatly upon the experience of the city. Walking or bicycling allow a more intimate engagement with the streets and the self, while taking public transit and driving, especially during rush hours, are ultimately the most affective and intense experiences, with the attendant line-ups and crowding on public transit, the traffic gridlock on highways. *How* one commutes is as important as where or why, and this "how" extends not only to the physical method of transport, but the mental view of it as well. The commute can be seen as simply transportation, a necessary dead time where nothing happens, or it can be a hectic rush to be endured and avoided if possible. It can be a time to prepare for work or to decompress, and it can also be "gift time" (Jain and Lyons 2008), a space for contemplation or enjoyment. It is the idea of "gift time" that I am interested in particularly, for as Ole B. Jensen (2009) points out, pleasure is a less discussed element of mobility, but one that can provide a more meaningful approach to everyday travel as a life practice.

For myself, I take pleasure in the commute as a creative mapping practice, a process of gaining deeper knowledge about my routes through the city, the material,

social and political histories of the places that I pass through, the visual and aural details, and in particular, the accumulation of stories that are various shades of made-up and true. Narratives, whether factual or fictional, have the power to provide meaning to what might otherwise be deemed "non-places" in Marc Augé's sense, that is, locales such as highways, airports, and any in-between kind of place "which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity" (1995, 63). Non-places do not exist in "pure" form, but rather on a continuum. I am interested overall in how we engage with these mobile urban spaces through narratives and stories, images and emotions, in order to move non-place closer to place.

To address the commute and to suggest alternative ways of experiencing non-places, I will outline a poetics of commuting with a view to building and expanding practices of artistic or social engagement within the city's networks. I will look at various cartographies in cinema and art that have engaged with ideas of the mobile city as narrative or poetic space, though the physical and material are also important parts of constituting these spaces. These poetics of commuting form the basis for developing a practice of what I call "the detour." Michel de Certeau (1984, 107) asks, "What does travel ultimately produce if it is not, by a sort of reversal...the return to nearby exoticism by way of a detour through distant places"? The detour encompasses the idea of the tour, as a narrative spatial practice in general and also as something a tourist does, which is to visit distant places in search of "exotic" experiences. But distance is not only physical. Local places can be distant if they are unknown. The detour plays with the idea of touring the local.

In mapping my different mobilities, I aim to define a poetics that takes into account a triad of space, map and tour. Space, here, refers to both physical and ephemeral spaces in the city, vectors of movement, velocities, time and rhythm. Map and tour correspond to Michel de Certeau's description of the map as a tableau of knowledge, the tour as a spatial narrative (these ideas will be further explored in the literature review). The detour combines and recombines the map and the tour together with heightened awareness to the many social, relational aspects of space as a "multiplicity of trajectories" that Doreen Massey (2005) proposes. Massey, James Corner, and other writers with postmodern concerns emphasize "the variety of

territorial, political and psychological social processes… The *interrelationships* amongst things in space, as well as the *effects* that are produced," rather than "solely compositional arrangements of objects and surfaces" (Corner 1999, 227; his emphasis). My conception of the detour is descended from the Situationist dérive and from such ideas as "dis-locative" arts, a term suggested by David Pinder (2013, 524-525) to address artistic practices that "engage, reframe and repurpose" location-aware media so as to question, unfix and unsettle ways of locating, especially ones that rely on military technology (GPS and GIS services) and tracking devices. It challenges the cartographic conventions of orthodox maps, focusing on the ephemeral elements of place and the emphasis on lived experience, stories and imagination – things that are not usually presented on the map.

The detour is the unexpected, the unplanned, the displaced; it is disquieting and places what is known into question. I propose a practice of detouring for those who wish to build or expand their spatial practices; I focus particularly on the daily commute because in my view, it is overlooked in terms of artistic encounters. The detour does not need to be physical, either. My creative works were made through processes of physical detouring, but work as maps of journeys that one can travel through virtually and mentally, and that aim to convey some of my ephemeral experiences of moving through the city. Like itinerary maps used by pilgrims, these mental maps can function as either practical or imaginative instructions (Delano-Smith 2006). My goal is to develop both a theory and a practice of the detour, along with artistic works that assist in highlighting everyday poetic engagements with the ephemeral, mobile city.

Situating

I lived in Montreal for exactly twenty years, where walking, bicycling and public transit were my main forms of travel through the city. I recently moved to Hamilton, where my main mode of travel is the car, although I am reflexively uncomfortable with the impulse to drive everywhere. I also take the GO Transit System to Toronto on a semi-regular basis. This relocation to a relatively unknown city presents an opportunity to study the evolution of my mental map of Hamilton, as well as to identify and define cinematic and poetic mapping techniques that can be used by those aiming to deepen

their knowledge of where they live. Also, in an effort to retain walking as a practice, I co-founded the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (HPU) along with Donna Akrey, an artist, and Sarah E. Truman, a writer/educator, both also relative newcomers to the city, in order to explore multiple ways of perambulating and mapping with various methods and viewpoints, and also as a public pedagogy.

My move to Hamilton from Montreal, provides a narrative arc of mobility. In terms of their transportation networks and experiences with mobile, urban space, these two cities are interesting case studies. Montreal has an award-winning transit system (the *Société de transport de Montréal* or STM), a well-developed network of bicycle lanes, distinct and walkable neighbourhoods, and many post-industrial sites in the midst of cultural and commercial transformation through gentrification. It has a long and well-imagined cinematic identity that contributes to its urban image. Hamilton is a small steel factory city in a provincial network of cities, now entering a post-industrial transition phase along with an attendant growing awareness of new urbanist ideals and activism that is pushing for bicycle lane development and Light Rail Transit. It has a reputation of becoming the new "cool" place to be (i.e., in the beginning stages of gentrification), attracting more investors and an influx of people looking for cheaper real estate, especially from the increasingly unaffordable Toronto, which is about 50 minutes away by GO Train or Bus. Indeed, the "Brooklynization" of Hamilton has become part of its image and narrative. Although long-distance commuting by GO is popular, driving remains the dominant form of transportation within Hamilton and within the context of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), as this area of Southern Ontario is known on the GO Transit website. City transit in Hamilton is underfunded, with many buses being either overcrowded or running only once an hour in off-hours.

How are my images, my impressions and views of these cities different when I walk, drive, or take the bus? How can heightened attention to the trajectories, stories, and ephemeralities change the way one engages with the city, to be more aware of its inter-relationships? These questions frame my research into the poetics of the commute, and how a useful practice of the detour can expand one's engagement with the city.

An "autocartography"

Svetlana Alpers (1987) tells of Cornelius Drebbel and Comenius, both of whom made only one map in their entire lifetimes, that of where they lived, and it seemed an accepted way to pay homage "to one's home while contributing to the knowledge of it" (60). Alpers speaks of a Dutch society where the language of maps was widely known, along with a particularly cartographic way of seeing. Mapping was, evidently, "a common, even casually acquired skill at the time" (60). This, to me, is such a wonderful idea, that it might be an accepted and even encouraged way for people to contribute to their communities by offering their local knowledge. This idea of an "autocartography" is not reliant on such concepts as "the quantified self" that focuses on measuring the body in various ways, such as with body tracking devices. It is not about documenting the self in a solipsistic manner, but about understanding how the self is constructed in relation to place. It combines the autobiography and autoethnography with a spatial view, the map as a repository of memory and story. It suggests possibilities of mapping in highly emotional and personal ways that can provide a sense of real belonging and citizenship.

An autocartography is thus related to what Alpers calls "the mapping impulse" (1987). From an analysis of a map in a Vermeer painting, Alpers sustains a discussion of the word *descriptio* that is found on the map in the painting. This term designated the enterprise of mapping. Mapmakers or publishers were called "world describers" and their works were "the world described" (59). This view of the mapping impulse as the art of describing certainly fits with much of my interest both in poetry and in image-making. I have often shot films, videos and photo-works on location (as opposed to in the studio), in geographically interesting spots or in urban public sites such as on the bus or metro. My work documents the city in space-time, a mapping and a describing. I map my movements through the city, adding to new areas of knowledge, new neighbourhoods and routes, or here, the same neighbourhoods and routes, but deeply. The idea of "deep mapping" or "deep topography" originally referred to practices of landscape-based writing that can incorporate history, auto/biography, folklore, memory and all types of narratives and emotions. Recently, however, works identifying as "deep mapping" have manifested as any combination of literature and illustration, as

well as radio, performance and multimedia (see Biggs 2011, 2010, Least Heat-Moon 1991).

In addition, Del Casino and Hanna argue that maps co-construct places through both representation and practice (the viewer constituting the map from the ink on paper as well as her surroundings); maps are always in the process of production, mobile subjects made up of "intertextual and interrelated sets of socio-spatial practices" (2011, 102). Indeed, there can never be anything like a final and definitive map as each one captures not only place, but a particular moment in time and a situated engagement. Such alternate conceptions of mapping and mapmaking practices play an important part in my investigation, especially as they pertain to the spatialization of the imagination.

Although maps are not usually consulted by commuters, save for glances at transit maps on buses or metros, they have great potential as tools that can help constitute, clarify, and/or complicate the spaces that we move through. A map clarifies geography, and can suggest places unknown that invite curiosity and exploration; it can link known places together and build spatial knowledge. Narrative cartography maps the stories associated with places, often those depicted in novels or plays, or through oral histories. Cinematic cartography invites a specifically modern pleasure that evokes the visual, emotive and affective properties of cinema and relates them to movement through urban space. Site-specific and geo-located storytelling links physical locations to fiction or drama. These artistic mapping practices have helped draw attention to the ephemeral qualities of personal and intimate city spaces that are as important as the physical and material.

Methodologies of mapping and mapmaking: the process and the poiesis

Mapping as process

My methodologies include three main, inter-related and simultaneous approaches: theoretical/critical, autoethnographic/phenomenological, and creative/cartographic. The first two approaches undertake the notion of mapping as a process of gathering knowledge, including the textual investigation of the theoretical aspects, from the

different mobilities to mapping to media art. I survey each particular method of mobility and its attendant field of literature, exploring the various ways of thinking through, about or around space, map and tour, in order to outline the elements particular to each, as well as similarities. These elements, I suggest, can form the basis for a poetics of commuting through the city.

Mapping as process also includes an exploration of how the body performs within a particular atmosphere, whether on a sidewalk, a crowded bus or alone in a car on the highway. The body, or more specifically my own body, is the focus of my second approach, which stems from my personal experiences and practices of navigating the city. Regardless of the type of mobility, whether walking, riding city transit or driving, my methodology takes from psychogeographic principles that are repurposed and expanded with an experimental and phenomenological autoethnography that is aware of my own contexts and situations. Autoethnography is "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act" (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, 1). My study of my own responses to the urban landscape also incorporates Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenological approach, which starts, as she succinctly puts it, with "the point from which the world unfolds: the here of the body and the where of its dwelling" (2006, 545). The body is not "merely an object in the world," rather "it is our point of view in the world" (551). In addition, our bodies give us not only our point of view but also impact how we are seen and treated by others. As the old feminist adage states, the personal is also political. Movement is a gendered activity, as many have pointed out, amongst many other social, political and performative things.

Autoethnography attempts a break from traditional colonialist models of ethnography, often focusing on subjectivity, reflexivity, fragmentation and hybridity. As a methodology within the media arts, autoethnography is becoming a cornerstone in many research-creation practices, often in conjunction with other qualitative mobile techniques such as the "go-along" or "walking-with," the use of video and audio to capture events or atmosphere, and time-space diaries (Büscher, Urry and Witchger

2010). Such techniques form the basis of my creative research, which frames the gathering of knowledge as an artistic experience that is integral to my methods of investigation. For instance, the act of looking for images to take and the act of framing, whether on a camera or cell phone, colors one's perceptions of place. One looks for patterns that repeat throughout the city, or else what is unique, with an eye towards colour, rhythm, composition and form, an ear for sound, etc. – in other words, with an artist's perspective. Thus, in addition to being phenomenological, my autoethnography is experimental as well because, as Catherine Russell points out in her book *Experimental Ethnography* (1999), the collision that occurs when "experimental" and "ethnography" are brought together can renew both avant-garde filmmaking/image-making and social theory (xi).

My video and audio gleanings as well as my records of encounters with strangers and neighbours form my archives, my database from which I can make maps. The theoretical readings inform my mapping process, which thus connects the theory and the embodied movement through space, necessary steps towards understanding the territory before making the map.

Mapmaking as poiesis

The creative and cartographic approach falls into a range of "research-creation" practices, wherein methods of creation are also forms of research into ways of knowing and making. It involves *poiesis*, traditionally defined as "the action of artists when they are focused" on the making of something (Fergusson 1961, 10). Mapping is a process of discovering and gathering information about places, particularly the deep mapping of the routine and the mundane, whereas mapmaking is a way of communicating locational and spatial information. The process of mapmaking, as in the creation of an aesthetic object, is in itself a kind of creative research, a necessary method of play and experimentation with aesthetics and resonance. One might try to pre-imagine a work into being, but it doesn't always (or usually) work according to plan.

The knowledge that comes from art, both in the making and the experiencing, is often indescribable. I use the term resonance here to try encapsulating the feeling that occurs when something "strikes a chord," whether in a major, minor, or discordant key

(the legend to a map is also a key). It could also refer to a poetic understanding that occurs in the leap the mind makes in connecting two or more thoughts or images: for instance, the mental image of a pond, a jumping frog and a sound of water, to cite Basho's famous haiku (Stryk 1985) – this is a poetic key. The exegesis can lay out the contexts, but cannot replicate the leap of mind that occurs. *You can lead a horse to water; you can point at the moon.* That is the value of the creative work: it shows, rather than tells. It lets you take the leap. Dancer Isadora Duncan is credited with saying that if she could tell you the meaning of the dance, she wouldn't have to dance it. There are leaps involved either way!

My creative practice thus involves both a process of mapping and a practice of mapmaking as a means to convey ephemeral experience that could not otherwise be described. The map as an object, in the form of a media work, strives to convey locational information through resonance, something that induces a moment of aesthetic pleasure or recognition. Stories and poetry are prime examples of works that can produce such moments. My maps are narrative and poetic, because mapping ephemeral elements of places such as emotions and imagined stories needs to be done creatively and aesthetically (Harmon 2003, 2009). I explore ways to map the places where I live, through the tracing of multiple narratives, both fictional and documentary, and based in the art of describing, which can include histories, materialities, images and sounds, as well as smells, textures, and atmospheres. My maps bring out the different layers of everyday places that might have gone hidden or unnoticed; they engage with the idea of "locative awareness" (Southern 2015) in some way. My writing is also a creative practice of mapping. It investigates the terrain of thought, and helps to make the geography of a subject clearer – to myself first more than anyone else. Finally, the results of mapping need not end up in an object. The participatory event of mapping is also a creative work that resides in the doing, the relational and the performative, as illustrated by the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit's "Strata-Walks" (this I will conclude with).

Each chapter in this book is accompanied by a different kind of map – in the form of a media work – that was made roughly around the same time that the research and writing occurred, and play in tandem with the themes explored. My maps are made

from my personal collected archives of the city. I began my creative life as a poet, and poetry remains with me still as the ground that supports my explorations, aesthetically and methodically, not always through words, but through rhythm and repetition, movement and montage, juxtaposition and metaphor. By relating some of the stories and images that have mapped themselves to my everyday routes and locations, and ultimately, in my conclusion, by outlining a "toolkit" of prompts and mapping practices, I hope to demonstrate some methods of the detour.

Maps and their legends: a key to reading this work

A work of creative research is a relatively new way of producing and examining knowledge within the institution. The term "research-creation" has become the category that, as Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk suggest, is "not so much a 'new' method as it is a 'newly recognized' academic practice that has gained ground in the past ten years" (2012, 6). In their essay "Research-Creation: Intervention, Analysis, and 'Family Resemblances'," four modes of creative practice are discussed: "research-for-creation," "research-from-creation," "creative presentations of research," and "creation-as-research." My media works and my writing are both grounded in research, by which I refer to the process of gathering ideas and concepts through reading, experimenting with technologies and materials, and wayfinding or experential movement. This is research-for-creation. My media works and writings are also creative ways to present my research, but perhaps most importantly, they are engaged in creation-as-research, by which knowledge is acquired through the making, "a strong form of intervention, contributing to knowledge in a profoundly different way from the academic norm" by "revealing new layers, permutations of reality, or 'experiences to be experienced'" (21). Clearly, these categories overlap and are connected, but extremely useful in identifying in academic terms their connections to the production of knowledge.

Research-creation, "as a method of inquiry, questions formulaic representations of the academic genre and the production of knowledge in print cultures" (Chapman and Sawchuk, 6). Much effort is still required to define and defend such practices within the academic framework. Questions persist around how art can be understood as knowledge, which ultimately calls for textual explication of some sort. However, there

seems to be an ontological disconnect between academic and creative practices of writing. Theoretical academic writing is supposed to focus on making research *explicit*, textually. Art and creative practices strive to make meaning *implicit*, to leave room for multiplicity and nuance. There are thus tensions between these two modes of textual knowledge production and dissemination. Is there a third space where these two modes can interact without hierarchy, as Elizabeth Grosz speaks of in her writings on architecture and philosophy (2001)? In addition, embodied experience is often best conveyed through art and literature, rather than academic exegesis. Can such explication be both critical and creative?

The textual exegesis is a kind of map in itself, a story-map that tells how my research has resulted in media-maps, which have in turn produced a kind of knowledge that is attuned to poetics. My writing, here, is thus a creative undertaking that also seeks to do the work of exegesis and contextualization, to move between the explicit and implicit. In such a broadly interdisciplinary undertaking, I aim not for a complete and exhaustive survey, as much of that has already been done elsewhere, but rather to bring together different fields and methodologies to understand how creative practices can transform the routine and the mundane. The works that are part of this thesis project are the threads that hold together my theoretical research, my embodied movements through the city, and my digital archives of images and narratives. They are maps that express my experiences about my inhabited routines in urban spaces. In short, I want to tell you stories about the places where I live. Sometimes, you might say, *oh, that happened to me too*. Sometimes, you might recognize something that will make you stop and look closer, to form a connection. The goal of my work, writing and media both, is the exploration of heightened awareness in the everyday city, and poetry in the quotidian, but in very different ways.

Each of the chapters in this thesis project explores three different types of mobility in the specific context of the routine commute: walking, taking city transit, and driving. Each chapter has a corresponding media work that was made in tandem with the writing. The first two media works and chapters – a panoramic photo collage of the *L'Acadie Fence* and *City Transit,* part of a multimedia atlas – resulted directly from my commuting practices, whereas the third, *Superhighway Suspense Movie* took form from

an alternate route of digital life, an exploration of the imagined fictive spaces of the highway in Google Street View. Furthermore, each of these works is a type of map, a "cartographic shape," as described by Teresa Castro (2009). For each of the media works, I provide an "interchapter" where I describe and further discuss its creation and relation to the project. My aim is to transmit knowledge in alternative ways that are aesthetic, emotional and ephemeral. This project should thus be taken as a hybrid form of creative non-fiction (another unwieldy label), critical analysis, and art practice. Each element is inherently related to the others, and an integral part of the whole.

Surveying the landscape (a review of the literature)

This study looks at how knowledge of the city is formed by moving through it, especially in the context of everyday travel or various forms of commuting, in order to outline a practice of detouring that can enhance and expand personal engagement with space and place. It builds from a number of overlapping fields of study and their corresponding bodies of literature: spatial and urban theory, cinema studies and mobilities studies (particularly forms of travel and mobile media). In this section, I offer a review of the key terms and literatures that inform my project.

Psychogeographies and moving images of the city

Dérive, in the original French, means "drift." Normally, during a Situationist dérive, one wanders according to the sensing of attraction and repulsion in the urban landscape, the "axes of passage" and "pivotal points" (Debord [1956] 1996, 26). While not aimless or random, there is no other purpose than the drift. The use of the body as an instrument that senses the "slopes" and "unities of ambiance" is the main element that provides a starting point to the detour. In English, "to derive" means " to take from," to find the roots, the precedents. In this sense, the detour derives from the dérive, but differs in that you do not necessarily need to get lost or to drift, physically. A detour can be optimally performed alone but may also benefit from group work. A detour can be virtual or mental, a cognitive map for instance. The dérive is not the only tool of psychogeography, after all.

Denis Wood, in his article "Lynch Debord: About two psychogeographies" (2010), points out that the Debordian practice emerged in the 1950s, at roughly the same time that Kevin Lynch was experimenting with his cognitive maps. Ten years later, Lynch's work came to influence researchers at Clark University who termed their studies "psychography" and eventually "psychogeography" (186). Although these two practices are very different, they share traits that are uncannily similar. Lynch and Debord were both interested in the city, and in the search for alternate ways of thinking, both methods "grew from a deep dissatisfaction with post-World War II urban-planning practices" (194). However, the obvious difference lies in intent. The Situationists were outside of urban planning as a profession, and aimed at turning the planned city of utility into one of games and dreams. Lynch was within the profession of urban planning and aimed to change its destructive tendencies towards shaping better cities and more memorable city-images.

Kevin Lynch's *The Image of a City* (1964) is a classic of urban studies and planning, especially his key concept of "imageability," which he defines as "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer. It is that shape, color, or arrangements which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment" (9). He notes that an environmental image may have three components of analysis: "identity, structure, and meaning" (8), though his study focuses on identity and structure since, as he points out, meaning is so variable from person to person and can develop without guidance. In addition, while Lynch finds that some people's city images are constructed like a map, that is, "instantaneously, as a series of wholes and parts descending from the general to the particular," for others "the image was put together in a more dynamic way, parts being interconnected by a sequence over time (even if the time was quite brief), and pictured as though seen by a motion camera. It was more closely related to the actual experience of moving through the city" (89).

The importance of paths and filmic sequences is echoed in Giuliana Bruno's short summary of different spatial turns in cinema studies (2006, 23), where she notes that the path of the travelling camera in city settings constructs urban experience as passages, as moving through architecture. Mobility and urban space are linked through

cinema's "constant haptic reinvention of space," and the street as a site of ephemeral and fleeting visual impressions is seen as "filmic" as much as architectural. Thus, images of the city are often constructed cinematically, as moving images, an important point that re-surfaces throughout this study. The two views of the city as static map and as moving image sequence correspond with Michel de Certeau's definitions of "map" and "tour," which are also central to this project, as explored in this next section.

Space and place, map and tour

Michel de Certeau was one of the first writers whose ideas about mapping, space, and the city really resonated with me, and clearly, I wasn't the only one who felt this way. *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) has been referenced almost to distraction. His essay "Walking in the City" recounts walking as an unconscious writing through the city as text, and introduces ideas that still resonate today. Amongst his key concepts are his considerations of space and place, the map and the tour. In "Spatial Stories," de Certeau delineates place as where the "law of the 'proper' rules," an "instantaneous configuration of positions" and "an indication of stability." On the other hand, space includes considerations of "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables," with none of the stability of place; "space is a practiced place" (117).

According to de Certeau, the map presents itself as an authority on place where there are sets of rules and plans, streets and architecture, places of interest, whereas the tour, which is the narrative, the context, and the human perspective, has disappeared from the map. Robert Macfarlane (2007), in a parallel comparison, describes what he terms "story maps" and "grid maps" as the difference between imaginative and functionalistic. Macfarlane defines story maps as "forms of spatial expressions that embody our personal experiences of the environment and contribute to creating a deep understanding of places" (142), whereas grid maps train the imagination to see and think in certain ways, and close off alternative points of view.

The grid map is seen as scientific and indexical. Bruno Latour (1990) argues that it is a prime example of an "immutable mobile," something that does not change according to context, that moves distances easily and without distortion. He outlines nine characteristics that are key to such "paperwork": "mobile, immutable, flat,

modifiable in scale, reproducible, capable of being recombined and layered, but also optically consistent and amenable to insertion into other texts" (65). However, as critical cartographers such as Denis Wood, Jeremy Crampton and John Pickles have argued, knowledge is established under politics of power, "mangled" with the military, politics, and intelligence; their work of "representation" needs to be constantly re-affirmed on an ongoing basis in an effort to appear secure, especially as they and the world are in constant motion (Crampton 2010, 61). Maps, at their most complex, are "arguments about existence" (Wood 2010b, 34). Colonial maps, for instance, helped to shape nations and states by presenting them as united by imaginary borders (Brückner 2006). Instead of colonial interests, the modern grid map presents the world as instantly knowable as well as available for consumption.

Many of the arguments coming from critical cartography correspond to de Certeau's view of the map as an authoritative system describing places as exhibitions of knowledge, and how it erases, through scientific discourse and geometry, the practices and itineraries that produce the map. De Certeau's ideas surface throughout this project, whether as primary influence or through critical response to his work.

Mapping and space

Massey's book *For Space* (2005) is a critique of binary thinking such as that of space and place in de Certeau's work and indeed, in much of western thought. Massey argues that binaries like space/place or here/there help to build a "billiard-ball view" of space, reductionist, essentialist, bounded, preconstituted, with "other places" as "backward" or "developing" as opposed to "advanced" or "developed" (68). The modern map constructs space as apart from and opposed to time, history, political and social relations, when instead, it could more productively be seen as a construction of vast interrelations and trajectories. Massey argues for an abandonment of these dichotomies, because she is looking for an imagination of space that can be significant politically. For change to occur, space cannot be a fixed, predetermined, closed or static representation. She notes that historically, representation "has been conceived of as spatialisation," that the spatial has a certain fixity of meaning (20). Just as "the text has been destabilised in literary theory so space might be destabilised in geography (and

indeed in wider social theory)" (29). Instead of the binary, Massey advances the recognition of "coevalness" and the existence of trajectories that have some degree of autonomy, that cannot be aligned into a linear (modern or master) narrative. Places are not "locations of coherence" but the foci, the meeting-point of potentially discordant or concordant trajectories. This kind of space emerges from interaction, as sphere of multicity that is open and ongoing, the process of the constitution of identity (71). Since space is relational and social, one also helps to alter space, co-constitute it, participate in its production. Thus space must be thought of as "a multiplicity of trajectories," each of which continue their histories as we pass by each other (119).

Massey is of course not the only theorist calling for alternative views of mapping and space. Del Casino and Hanna give one of the first criticisms of "social constructivism" in cartography, also suggesting that it has become necessary to move past such binaries as representation and discourse, production and consumption, authoring and reading, conceptualisation and interpretation (summoning up Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* where they argue not for *either/or* but *and…and…and…).* Del Casino and Hanna contend that maps co-construct places through both representation and practice (the viewer constituting the map from the ink on paper – or screen – as well as her surroundings); maps are always in the process of production, mobile subjects made up of "intertextual and interrelated sets of socio-spatial practices" (2011, 102). Turning to "poststructuralist actor-network theories" that do not distinguish between the "real" world and re-presentation, the authors focus instead on process.

Similarly, James Corner (1999) states that in visualizing interrelationships, mapping itself helps to constitute "future unfoldings" that may help designers and planners to see possibilities in the complex and contradictory mapped space, as well as actualize those possibilities. This function is increasingly important in a world where it is become more difficult "to both *imagine* and actually to *create* anything outside of the normative" (214). Corner expresses his interest in mapping as a creative activity rather than as a finished product, and in the participatory sense of "new and speculative techniques" that may bring forth new practices that are "expressed not in the invention of novel forms but in the productive reformulation of what is already given" (217). In

his article "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention," Corner compares Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion projection maps to Mercator's to reveal "radically different spatial and socio-political structures." This example really gives a sense of what "productive reformulation" might look like, and this is particularly important, because if we cannot imagine it, we cannot act. Corner also differentiates mapping from "planning," which more or less imposes a project down from on high. Where "the plan leads to an end, the map provides a generative means" (228).

Map reading

A map, a film, and a landscape can each be read like a text. Taking an approach from literary studies, one can then deconstruct and decode it, to destabilize it. Critical cartographers such as Denis Wood have deconstructed the map, essentially reading the semiotics of the map as text, to show its social and political constructions. Wood is one of the original critical cartographers intent on showing how maps gain their power through a system of scientific signs, linkage with the state, and how a map is really an argument that tries to establish authority.

For instance, in a manner similar to philosopher and semiologist Roland Barthes's famous decoding of an ad for Italian pasta in "Rhetoric of Images," Wood and Fels (1986) examine the rhetoric of a North Carolina State Road Map. They argue that this map refers not only to the highways and roads that it shows, but to the image of the state itself. That is, North Carolina's "automotive sophistication, urbanity and leisure opportunity" (60) can be read in the legend's use of a cardinal (state bird), a flowering dogwood branch (state tree) and a honeybee (state insect), its claim that "North Carolina's highway system is the Nation's largest State-maintained Network. Hard surfaced roads lead to virtually every scenic and vacation spot," (55) and finally its "Guide to Points of Interest" that features a selection of photos. This map was given away for free in a variety of promotional strategies, from Welcome Centers to kiosks at State Fairs. Besides the tangled network of multi-coloured lines signifying roads and highways, it features a motorist's prayer, a ferry schedule, and advertisements for local businesses. There are no depictions of paths, bike lanes, or public transportation. The

overall message of the map is constructed through each cartographic, pictorial and textual element, few of which are actually helpful to navigation.

Map art

Mapping has recently experienced a surge of interest from artists, as seen in many publications such as *You Are Here* (Harmon 2003), *The Map as Art* (Harmon 2009), *Else/where: Mapping* (Abrams and Hall 2006), *Infinite City* and *Unfathomable City,* Rebecca Solnit's poetic and fantastic atlases about San Francisco (2010) and New Orleans (with Rebecca Snedeker, 2013). Many artistic maps are also counter-maps that protest the status quo, make critiques, reframe public discourse, or preserve "un-official" memories, from the Situationists to Jake Barton's *City of Memory* project (http://www.cityofmemory.org), to critical cartographers mapping disputed territories. My research involves exploring a series of artists' maps, films about place, and locative media works, specifically to gauge "best practices" of artistic engagements with the mobile and liminal spaces of the city.

Particularly relevant are Denis Wood's maps of his neighbourhood of Boylan Heights in North Carolina, examples of what he calls a "poetics of cartography." In *Everything Sings* (2011), he relates how as a grad student in the 60s, protesting the war and resisting the draft, he wanted to "destroy existing modes of mapmaking through which millions were repeatedly killed" through target mapping and the like (17). Eventually, in 1982 with his students, he made a map of street lights in his neighbourhood and pared away all the inessentials, the "map crap" of lines, scales, the north arrow, the topography, and finally the streets (that were so hard to get rid of, being the thing which made neighbourhoods), and even daylight. And then he knew we could "write poems in maps" (19).

The idea of the neighbourhood as "a process, a process-place or a process-thing, that transforms anywhere into *here*" (22) begat the idea of a narrative atlas of Boylan Heights as traces caught by maps. Wood makes a series of artistic maps that are indeed more like poems: The Night Sky; Squirrel Highways; Disfigured Trees; Pools of Light; Signs for Strangers; Lester's Paper Route in Time and Space; Rhythm of the Sun (rhythms figure largely for Wood, and remind me of Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis*);

The Light at Night on Cutler Street; Jack-O'-Lanterns; Rooflines… Wood offers different ways to think about mapping and space as indications of place according to narratives and metaphors. Narrative atlases like Wood's show how the process of mapping can be deeply considered and poetic, how it can teach one to notice the small details that crop up, that add detail to one's own mental map, especially narratives, the human perspective, the tour. His poetic maps lead me to a discussion of another aspect of mapmaking: the deep knowledge of place.

Deep knowledge of place

Deep knowledge and love of place is the subject of Yi-fu Tuan's *Space And Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977). Tuan attempts to define, describe and relate "space" and "place" through the concept of human experience. His definition is thus a little different than de Certeau's. His thinking is not quite as oppositional, acknowledging that in experience, the meanings of space and place often merge, and that they require each other for definition. However, like de Certeau, he notes that "if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (6). Tuan also explores different things that move us, how sentiments build up like sediment for a place, and how home and everyday life feel real, even if this is not always noticed. Intimate experiences are hard to express, to make public; literature and art can function to express them.

Dolores Hayden (1995) also notes the importance of storytelling as a way to approach space and the histories of place, especially those that tend to be marginalized. Stories make it possible to map, for example, spatial segregation for African American communities, not just in terms of neighbourhoods or streets but in stores and public institutions. The same mapping based on gender would find spatial segregation limiting parts of buildings (men's clubs, programs in higher education) or even parts of a room (where a woman might enter but have to sit separately). Hayden notes that storytelling aids social memory, and that what Edward S. Casey called "place memory" can also aid social memory through the urban landscape: "We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported" (46). Much of the work at Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, for instance,

maps oral narratives to place. Projects such as these suggest new ways to stretch the cartographic imagination. They offer glimpses of maps concerned with relationalities, narratives, itineraries, and communities, all possible ways of taking the detour.

Thirdspace

Edward Soja begins his book *Thirdspace* (1996) by stating a simple goal: to encourage a different way of seeing and thinking about "the spatiality of human life" in all its forms, with a distinctly political spin on his study of spatiality. Soja builds on Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space,* particularly his "triple dialectic" of spatiality, historicality, and sociality (or as Soja dubs it "trialectic"). Importantly, he advances a critical strategy that he calls "thirding-as-Othering," (5) an attempt to break the binary way of thinking. His applications of postcolonial concepts such as hybridity and his leanings towards literature strike a chord in me as well, which are the reasons I turn to Soja rather than Lefebvre. His "touristic" accounts of the city focus on the vernacular, the mundane and everyday, and in this, Soja has much in common with others in cultural landscape theory such as J.B. Jackson and Lucy Salmon. The concept of "Thirdspace" or the "real-and-imagined" leads me to consider place as composed of layers of history and fiction among many other elements.

My view on the commute and the places and spaces where the commute happens is from an interdisciplinary perspective that stands on the "outside," that is, not from the perspective of an urban planner, transit expert, etc. This outside seems a bit like the third space suggested by Elizabeth Grosz, who looks at architecture (as a philosophical idea rather than through case studies) from the outside, that is, both as a non-architect and from a distance, which affords the possibility to critically evaluate a position, though one cannot be completely or fully outside everything. Grosz advocates for a third space is required in which architecture and philosophy can interact without hierarchy, one that does not yet exist. This space is one where experiments and perils can exist. This concept overlaps with Soja's Thirdspace that is both real and imagined, though Grosz also invokes a third sense of the word, that of the outsider, alien, inassimilable, stranger (and also, I might add, the immigrant). Grosz's "outside" is similar to de Certeau's walker and voyeur on high: the outside allows perspective, to

see “what cannot be seen from the inside, to be removed from the immediacy of immersion that affords no distance” (2001, xv), but something is lost in that movement, that very immediate intimacy. The place of the destitute, the homeless, the sick and the dying, the place of social and cultural outsiders—including women and minorities of all kinds—must also be the concern of the architectural and the urban just as it has been of philosophy and politics.

Mobilities

Critical spatial theory crops up in much of mobility studies, an interdisciplinary field that explores motion in its many forms, not only through transportation networks of physical bodies and goods, but also networks of communication manifest and made available as mobile media. In terms of the physical act of moving through the city, key theorists include Erving Goffman ([1959] 1973) and Georg Simmel ([1907] 1998), both sociologists who focused on the minute interactions of everyday life in urban settings. As well, they both used a dramaturgical framework, comparing everyday performance with theatrical performance and giving a highly useful set of metaphors as tools in the discussion of the quotidian. Goffman and Simmel are referenced often in studies about the everyday city, especially those that offer a glimpse into commuting from sociological and ethnographic approaches (see Bissell 2009, de Souza e Silva and Frith 2012, Watts 2008). Henri Lefebvre’s idea of rhythmanalysis is often applied to mobility (see Edensor 2011, Cresswell 2010); Marc Augé’s concept of the “non-place” (1995) crops up often in other studies (see Arefi 1999, Edensor 2011, Merriman 2004, Sharma 2009).

Mobile media intersects much of this work on physical mobility by focusing on networks of communication and technologies such as the cell phone and tablet. As these mobile media devices become ubiquitous, they offer a potential to bring out the pleasures of commuting through the experience of “gift time” and “equipped time” (Jain and Lyons 2008). “Equipped” refers to the growing presence of technologies that allow a commuter to control how time is spent while in transit, from listening to music (Bull 2000, 2007) to reading, working, and playing games. Locative mobile media in particular is able to provide a unique digital interface with the city that then becomes a

"hybrid space" (Farman 2012, Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011), which is a useful concept in relation to the detour. There is also a wide range of locative mobile media art with seemingly similar goals as mine: *[murmur]* is a site-specific audio project that scatters green signs in the shape of ears around the city, bearing phone numbers that, when called, offer stories told by residents of that particular neighbourhood; *34 North 118 West*, by Los Angeles artists Naomi Spellman, Jeremy Hight and Jeff Knowlton, uses GPS technology, a tablet and headphones to trigger audio fragments for the wanderer moving through certain areas of L.A. such as old industrial zones. Both these projects use a sort of "narrative archaeology" to unearth ephemeral layers of story and sound, opening up the city's physical spaces to the real-and-imagined (Armstrong 2003). Blast Theory, a collective based in the UK, mixes interactive media with performance to make locative cinema works such as *A Machine to See With*, which uses cell phone instructions to thrust the participant into a bank heist story. Locative cinema is an especially intriguing idea that projects cinematic onto geographic locations, adding fiction and emotion onto the real-and-imagined layers that make up place.

The cinematic city

In the last decade, there have been many books and essays exploring cinema and urban space, and this popularity is no surprise, really. The "spatial turn" has highlighted our growing attention to space and place. Cinema and urban space are coincident, growing and developing together during the first half of the twentieth century, intertwined in their influence each on the other. Recently, the subject has become much focused upon, as evidenced by a plethora of books dealing with various takes on cinema and the city from the intersections of film studies, geography, cultural history and architectural theory (see Barber 2002, Clarke 1997, Krause and Petro 2003, Koeck and Roberts 2010, Penz and Lu 2011, Roberts and Hallam 2013). In particular, what Teresa Castro calls "cartographic cinema," or the mapping of space through cinematography, may be useful in describing the city from the perspective of the tour. Castro, in her essay "Cinema's Mapping Impulse" (2009), shows how filmmakers and cartographers are closely related through their attempts in visualizing the world.

James Donald, in *Imagining the Modern City* (1999), claims that space is

constituted through narrative, and that our imaginations are inherently narrative, not so much mapping spaces or representing events as projecting events onto space (like onto a screen). However, the effect of these narrative events is real. Such narratives can thus be thought of as "potent speech acts" (123), that is, performative utterances that provoke real transformations. How a city is remembered and described through stories and images can change the city itself in concrete ways – for instance, through the effects of movie tourism (Joliveau 2009). In a similar vein, Giuliana Bruno focuses on art and cinema as both "practices of space": a sense of place is actively generated by images, including films, both those shot on location and those made on sets. "In many ways, a city becomes activated as a place on the screen as much as it does on the street" (2002, 28). Cinema is a shaper of perception not only through visuality but also through imagination, narrative, and emotion. Through cinema, spatial critical theory charts a movement from "sight" to "site" with the goal of re-imagining and revitalizing the city, and suggests new ways of mapping the ephemeral.

Contribution

In his book *Non-Places* (1995), Marc Augé looks at the global expansion of spaces that have the status of "in-between," including airports, shopping malls, train stations, motels, highways and all the various means of transportation and transit areas. However, Tim Edensor (2011) critiques the reduction of such places to non-place as overlooking the complex practices and the material atmospheres that make them up. As well, he aims to counter popular representations of commuting as a dystopian and alienating routine. This study is also about countering such representations, specifically through notions of pleasure and place-making and how they can transform the liminal and performative spaces of the city.

My research lends itself to the exploration of perambulation, public transit and other forms of urban mobility, as ways to gain deep knowledge about a place. While walking has experienced a surge of interest in recent years, the daily commute on highway or city transport has either been overlooked or represented as a boring, if not

soul-crushing activity that best be avoided, and the antithesis of the ideal (perhaps utopic) urban life. Even if one does not commute, it is hard not to be affected by the rhythms of rush hour. The shift from the centripetal city to the centrifugal suburb (as related by Edward Dimendberg, 2004), or in this case, the centrifugal Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), certainly demands more attention.

While there is a definite dystopian side to automobility, especially in terms of the environment, the act of commuting itself, whether on foot, by bike, by car or city transit, may have positive or pleasurable aspects. There has not been much research, either creative or theoretical, into the commute as a unique, everyday liminal space that is ripe for artistic encounters and storytelling to materialize the city in transformative ways. Mobility studies in general have been descriptive, exploring sociologies of the act of moving, and in what ways mobile media is used to control how time is spent while commuting. Few of these studies have looked at the importance of imagination and narrative, and how these influence and co-construct mobile space.

My study aims to inquire further into the impact of imagination and narrative on mobile space and place, but with a more prescriptive view that advocates active engagements with the networks of a city. "Reseach-creation" attempts to meld theory and an artistic practice, in my case, one that aims to both defamiliarize the familiar (those places we pass through everyday) and to make unknown places better known (these may also be places we pass through everyday). Dissemination of a creative outcome allows for alternative ways of knowing and aims for greater affect and connection with the audience. Cinema is well-suited to mapping stories and emotions to places and non-places, as I will explore in relation to the auto-commute. Cinema's relationship to the map would lead, seemingly naturally, to locative cinema, and indeed, there have been many recent forays into place-based art and oral history, though fictional narratives, not so much. Walking is the dominant form of mobility in most of these works. Only a few projects have engaged with movement on wheels (for instance, Samuel Thulin's *Here to Hear,* a musical composition made from field recordings of a particular bus route to be listened to in-situ, or Audiotopie's *Cartier: Stéréobus*, a narrative bus tour). My project seeks to explore the possibilities of locative art in particular as part of a detouring practice. I conclude by outlining the specific elements

of a detouring practice as well as a suggestive “toolkit” of practices and prompts, advocating for deeper connections to place, not only for pleasure in knowledge but to reveal possibilities of social change.

A poetics of urban mobility can make the familiar strange in order to liberate new ways of thinking; cinema, as with other arts, does not only record or reflect, but actively helps constitute both the built environment and the way we perceive it. This study will conclude by presenting the framework for a practice of detouring, based on creative mapping methodologies. The detour helps us to see in different ways, to create, navigate, and discover a possible view of the city (and the world) as a place where each of us can feel more at home.

Interchapter One

L'Acadie Fence

(the documentary detour)

Figure 1: Both sides of *L'Acadie Fence* – excerpt

The L'Acadie Fence is one of Montreal's most pronounced symbols of power relations, a chain-link fence that stands on the border of two neighbourhoods: Parc-Extension (PX) and Town of Mount Royal (TMR). I encountered it almost daily on my walking commute. In attempting to closely examine the lived spaces of my urban everyday, the recurrence of routine along with the accumulation of personal and collective meaning, I began to read and document the urban landscape as I moved through it. On my commutes, I made a habit of taking my camera as a way not only of capturing the passage of time and space, but of provoking my attention to the landscape. The fence, being a major border as well as the subject of stories, rumours and general feelings of "gatedness," naturally attracted my attention, both photographically and theoretically.

The act of looking for images to take, the framing and composing, affects one's perceptions of place. One looks for patterns that repeat throughout the city, or else what

is unique or new, with an eye towards colour, rhythm and form, an ear for sound, perhaps even a nose for odors. I also collected stories of encounters with neighbours and strangers as short texts and poems. I cast a watchful eye (a detective as well as a collector), taking note of clues that enabled me to ask questions and make connections through further historical and sociological inquiry. All of these documents are collected digitally as an archive of my route and my neighbourhood, amounting to around 1500 photos as well as about 30 texts over three years.

Around this time, I was also reading texts about the Montreal urban landscape and about Thirdspace, as proposed by Edward Soja (1996), so my thoughts about the fence developed in tandem with my decision to begin documenting it. The making of the *L'Acadie Fence* photo-collage thus became a literal detour for me. It took me out of my usual way and my normal routine, giving impetus to go all the way around it, all 1.6 kilometres – not everyday, of course, but whenever I could make a bit of extra time.

The following chapter on the walking commute was written at the same time as the making of the photo-collage, and is meant to stand alongside the artwork – indeed, is intertwined with it. The writing maps my route between the two neighbourhoods, and inquires into the different spaces that make up these places – the histories, the social encounters with neighbours and strangers, and the psychogeographic ambiances. The photos contained within the essay function as documents of some of the material clues, but at the same time, I derive aesthetic pleasure from them in varying degrees. Documenting the entirety of the fence also meant that I was turning it into an aesthetic object, but one that held tensions in the differences of its surrounding environments and ambiances.

I concentrated mainly on the TMR side of the fence at first, looking into Parc-X, as it simply offered easier access. From this side, I had a view of the many apartments that lined the Parc-X side of L'Acadie Boulevard, signifying the greater density and sociality of that neighbourhood. Later on, I began photographing the other side, looking into TMR across the six lanes of traffic. The houses are larger, detached, with more trees reaching above the roofs. The two difference ambiances had a basis in different approaches to the built environment that could be seen clearly in the two sides of the fence photo-collage.

As I composited the photos together, I concentrated on not making a seamless panorama, as many other works more or less do – see, for instance, Edward Ruscha's artist book of *Every Building on Sunset Strip* (1966), or Danny Singer's *Main Street* (http://mainstreet.nfb.ca/), an interactive National Film Board project that features stunning panoramic photos of the main streets in small towns across Canada. Stan Douglas' *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* (2002) is perhaps more directly connected with *L'Acadie Fence* in terms of intent, for while it is definitely has a more polished aesthetic, the book project similarly documents a boundary through both photo and essay, this time to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside – one of the most contested inner-city neighbourhoods in the country.

Aesthetically in *L'Acadie Fence*, I wanted to keep the fragmented nature of the different photos stitched together into wonky perspectives, some of the buildings flattened out, squished so that both sides are on display. The different seasons were important to incorporate, so that the passing of time was also part of the archive. The sections of the fence closest to the St-Roch gate where I usually crossed were naturally where I took the most photos.

The long photo-collage explores the idea of the panorama as travel through space and time. It is a descendent of the panorama and diorama in the early 19th century that emerged as forms of pre-cinematic spectacle, building machines of "virtual transport" that incorporated "large 360-degree paintings which surrounded the viewer" and gave a sense of movement through such effects as lighting changes. They were meant to transport the viewer into the landscape, and to stimulate the "virtual gaze" (Featherstone 1998, 919). Teresa Castro's panorama as a cartographic shape relates to these early panoramas as responding to the mapping impulse's "desire to embrace and to circumscribe space, allowing for the observer's eye to seize the whole of an image" (2009, 11). She refers to cinema's penchant for capturing views and landscapes that represented "the careful scaling and coding of the world through filmic means, namely, horizontal and 360° panoramic shots" (12). The resulting photographic collage works as a map, presenting the whole of the fence at once, though it also replicates the journey virtually, since the image is very long and your gaze must travel alongside it to have a good look. It is thus an archive of my journeys around and through the fence, and makes

no attempt to present a unified perspective, illustrating the multi-faceted nature of urban sites, especially contested ones.

The making of the L'Acadie Fence, both essay and photo-collage, opened up the detour both as a physical movement and a mental one, a method of urban landscape reading and trialectic analysis that has helped me gain a deeper knowledge of my walking commute and each of the other commutes as well. Photography as a psychogeographic tool helps me frame and focus on overlooked aspects of my quotidian experience, and through an artistic process of aestheticizing and compositing, to destabilize the fixed images and routine passages of the city. This is what I call the documentary detour.

Chapter One: The Walking Commute

There has been much attention paid in recent years to walking as an aesthetic act, a political act, a process of mapping and place-making, and even as poetry. Sometimes walking is all of these things at once. Perambulation, as Rebecca Solnit has explored in her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001) is said to give form to thinking and meditation as well as exercise. Solnit follows the development of walking from evolutionary history to an aesthetic and philosophical act, from Wordsworth to Thoreau, Rousseau, Baudelaire, Benjamin and, it seems, almost everyone who ever wrote about or was influenced by walking. Other books about walking include *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice* by Francesco Careri (2002), *A Philosophy of Walking* by Frédéric Gros (2014), *Walking and Mapping* by Karen O'Rourke (2013), and *The Art of Taking a Walk (1998)* by Anke Gleber, about the history of the flâneur and the flâneuse. Michel de Certeau's poetic essay "Walking in the City" must of course be mentioned as a classic in the genre. His walker in the streets vs. voyeur on high can be paralleled to the map, which is the view from on high, the totalizing and distanced gaze, vs. the tour, or the human perspective from below. These dichotomies have become engrained in the discourse. But Doreen Massey (2005) reminds us to go beyond binaries and look for an alternate vision of space, because we ourselves are not black and white binaries but millions of shades of grey, each of us passing each other by on our way to somewhere else.

Artists such as Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, and Jeremy Wood have made walking a central part of their practices, while many other artist groups and networks have sprung up to investigate the walk, including the very active Walking Artists Network (www.walkingartistsnetwork.org), The Ministry of Walking (www.ministryofwalking.ca), and the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (www.hamiltonperambulatoryunit.org), to name only a few. There is a myriad of academic conferences, essays and issues of art journals devoted to aesthetic, social and political walking. Many of these begin with variations on flânerie à la Baudelaire and Benjamin, or getting lost, the way members of the Situationists, the Surrealists or Fluxus did. The Surrealists, for instance, looked at strolling as a method of contacting the

subconscious, Fluxus as an act of performance. All of these movements proposed in various ways a revolution of everyday life and a reclamation of the city (Waxman 2010, 2). The Situationist dérive as a psychogeographic tool is particularly called upon in contemporary practices, functioning as the basis for alternate ways of mapping the city, as capitalist critique, as a measurement of the emotional landscape, as well as the identification of "unites d'ambiance" in the urban landscape. Nowadays it has been used loosely to describe almost any randomized walking tour or practice, detached from its theoretical framework that originated as a critique of the growing spectacularization of society.

Clearly, there is much to be gained from walking as art, as a tool for critical geography, and as exercise. However, most of the works mentioned above address walking as a form of wandering, rather than as a necessary routine. Indeed, the dérive is by Guy Debord's definition the opposite of the commute:

> In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there ([1956] 2006, 22).

Who can afford to dérive? Not parents, usually, nor those with full-time jobs, nor those who are not as easily mobile… in short, the greater part of society. Walking is paradoxically a choice of privilege for those who are able, who can afford the wandering time, or who can afford to live within walking distance from work, and a choice of necessity for those without means for other forms of transportation. In theory, it is the urbanist's ideal form of travel, along with other "centripetal" mobilities such as bicycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, etc. These different mobilities could all be considered "centripetal" because they are most often linked with urban cores. They support the idea of the city as built on a human scale, rather than as car-centered sprawl.

My Montreal commuting routines included a 20-minute walk and a 45-minute transit ride (one way, then back again), and both these journeys made up an integral part of my daily life. I begin with walking as a basis for investigation because it is a

practice and a theoretical field with a well-established history; however, I focus on the routine commute rather than the wander, precisely because it is the opposite of the much discussed dérive. While methods of play and long wanders are important interventions designed to break routine and deepen one's knowledge of the urban landscape, it is as routine that walking might have the most relevance and impact upon daily life. Rather than seeing routine as something needing to be broken, how can one make use of it as a tactic towards connection to place?

Unlike the wander, there is with the walking commute no discovery of new places, no getting lost. The route is familiar. Each journey like onion-skin is laid over all the previous journeys to create a narrative of place, each detail adding up, often unnoticed until something is different. But attending to the details can clarify the story. Michael Sorkin, in his book *Twenty Minutes in Manhattan* (2009), provides an excellent example, detailing his route from his home in Greenwich Village to his studio in Tribeca, a twenty minute walk that he has taken for over fifteen years. He begins with a chapter on his front stairs that leads to discussions on architecture, apartment living, neighbourliness and stoop-sitting, and so forth, moving along his daily route. In his discussion of gentrification, Sorkin notes that as walkable cities become an urbanist ideal, they also tend to become less affordable and less diverse. But lack of choice not withstanding, it is also clear that the walking commute can indeed be the ideal commute: daily exercise and the chance to create an intimate mental archive of the space-time that is one's route. It gives itself to a material analysis because one is in closer contact with one's surroundings. It is arguably the best method for detailing and describing the city in its physical form. This mental archiving of one's route can also be used with other kinds of commuting, though the spaces and results will be different. What the dérive can bring to a commuting practice is the impetus to pay attention.

James Donald uses the metaphors of policing and detection to show how social regulation was expressed in modern architecture and urban planning, new disciplines that rose with the fast growth of cities. He also shows how images became "evidence" and "detection," especially through photographer Eugène Atget, "one of the first visual archivists of the city as heritage" (1999, 41). Along with the archaeologist/critical allegorist and the collector, the flâneur/detective illuminates Benjamin's "botanizing on

the pavement"; these figures are methodological metaphors for Benjamin's way of working in the arcades, watching and interpreting.

For almost three years, I walked from my house in the Montreal neighbourhood of Parc-Extension (Parc-X) to my son's school in the Town of Mont Royal (TMR) and back again, a routine and a route that went through two very different neighbourhoods. The details of this commute is the subject of this chapter: a close reading of the social, historical and material landscape, and of myself moving through it as mediated by my camera. Like Walter Benjamin's figure of the detective, I cast a watchful eye, taking note of clues that enable me to ask questions and make connections through further historical and sociological inquiry. Benjamin connected the flâneur to the detective to city streets, and here, I too take on the role of the detective. This routine provides the opportunity to investigate some methodologies for detouring the walking commute.

Approach

From 2010-2013, the route of my walking commute led me from my home in the densely populated Parc-X, across a busy six-lane boulevard and a long, gated, chain-link fence, to a quiet, green, suburban neighbourhood where my son's elementary school was located in the middle of two playgrounds, a large sports field, tennis courts and a splash park. In attempting to examine closely the lived spaces of my urban everyday, the recurrence of routine along with the accumulation of personal and collective meaning, I began to read and document the landscape as I moved through it. If the heightened awareness of a dérive results in a different kind of walk, perhaps that attention can be applied to the routine commute. After all, commuters can still "let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there," as Guy Debord previously suggested ([1956] 1996, 22). Routine can be dulling to the senses, however, so sometimes one needs prompting to pay attention. There are many ways to do this, but these I found to be most useful to me. Every commuter needs to develop an individual practice.

Like a crime photographer, I began to look at urban spaces physically for clues through the lens of my camera. I took photos of a lot of garbage, of the streets and architecture, the trees turning with the seasons. Photographic evidence, but of what? The fence that I crossed each day, in particular, became the subject of my camera and my research. In photographing the entire fence during different times of the year, the focusing, framing, editing, and compositing all became tools to explore the materiality of the fence itself. Over a three year period, I began to walk around the fence rather than through it, to look closely at the flowering of the hedge and the shedding of its leaves, how the wire of the fence was rusting in places, sagging, or newly patched, how snow drifted and was piled up against the fence in winter. The resulting photographic-collage mural works as an archive of my journeys along and through the fence, as well as the two neighbourhoods on either side.

Finding Thirdspaces of representation

Around the same time that I began photographing the fence in 2010, I was also reading Edward Soja's *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996), which opened up many ways to approach a cultural reading of the fence. Soja begins by stating a simple goal: to encourage a different way of seeing and thinking about "the spatiality of human life" in all its forms (1). He advocates a trialectical approach, based on Henri Lefebvre's theories in *The Production of Space,* which would take into equal account the three elements of the spatial, the historical, and the social. Soja's three spaces correspond roughly to Lefebvre's three elements: "Firstspace" starts with "Spatial Practice" and focuses on the real, the visual, the material and the spatial (produced through the social); "Secondspace" begins with "Representations of Space" and tends to be the most influential space, that of history and the imagined. As Soja (and Lefebvre) argue, "this is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)" and incorporates language, text, discourse, and thus representations of ideology (38-39). "Thirdspace" takes off from Lefebvre's "Spaces of Representation" with an emphasis on social relations, power dynamics, lived experience, emotion, and the everyday. Soja brings a particularly postcolonial view to Thirdspace, citing bell hooks and her radical choice of marginality, Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity, Gayatri Spivak and

Edward Said's critiques of historicism through the subaltern and Orientalism. It is for this view in particular that I turn to Soja rather than the original trialectics defined by Lefebvre.

In part two of the book, Soja begins to apply his approach to journeys (or case studies) through Los Angeles and Amsterdam. Los Angeles, he argues, is especially in need of different ways of seeing, with its problems of racial tension, class oppression, and other associated human inequalities. Soja focuses especially on the explosive Rodney King riots in 1992, relating the violence to the downtown spaces of L.A. and their histories. In contrast to the dystopia of L.A., Amsterdam is presented as a city that works. His "tourist" accounts of his journeys focus on ways of reading the landscape visually as well as historically, with an emphasis on the vernacular, the mundane and the everyday, and in this, Soja has much in common with others who look critically at the landscape and the built environment, writers such as John Brinkerhoff Jackson, Lucy Salmon, Setha Low and Rosalyn Deutsche. This project, both photographic collage mural and essay, takes its cue from a Thirdspace approach then, as well as from those who focus on personal experiences of space, history, and social relations. I remain engaged with a trialectic approach to examine and develop an aesthetic and critical practice of the walking commute.

Embodied excursions

The fact of a body moving through an environment both affects and is affected by that environment. The detective, aware of herself as subject. Because I can situate myself within historical and material contexts, this is an autoethnographic project as well as an aesthetic and critical one (Ellis et. al. 2011). Catherine Russell, in her book *Experimental Ethnography* (1999), investigates the collision that occurs when "experimental" and "ethnographic" are brought together to rethink both aesthetics and cultural representation, a "methodological incursion" that renews both avant-garde filmmaking and social theory. She notes that identity can become a powerful tool of cultural criticism, especially when politicized as the site of such discourses as ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, race or class, and proposes that "autobiography becomes ethnographic at

the point where the film- or videomaker understands his or her personal history to be implicated in larger social formations and historical processes" (276).

This project stems from my own experiences and practices of navigating the city as a form of "autobiographic ethnography." Thus, this "autoethnographic" methodology incorporates the ongoing task of being aware not only of the urban landscape but the self's effect on the landscape. Further, my embodied experience is also about how the specifics of my body as an "Inappropriate Other" can affect the social space. Trinh T. Minh-Ha speaks about the double positioning of the outsider who is not foreign, who "refuses to reduce herself to an Other" but is not quite the same as the insider (1991, 74). Being both on the inside and the outside, my position can both invoke spaces of conflict or tension and allow a reflexivity that is useful to identify and destabilize such spaces.

My practices as a media artist are naturally affected by my positioning. I also follow Sara Ahmed's specifically queer phenomenological approach, which asks what it means to be oriented in terms of wayfinding, how one knows what to do to move towards certain objects, to get to a destination, to have one's bearings. But "objects gather quite differently, creating different grounds" (2006, 543). Philosophically, she asks, does it matter what one is oriented towards? Ahmed investigates this question from viewpoint of sexual orientation and brings it into dialogue with phenomenology in order to engage with how a body senses objects and thus itself. As she notes, "phenomenology emphasizes the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready to hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds" (544).

My identity orients me towards things, which are also affected by my presence. What does it say about me that I find debris interesting, for instance, that I look for objects and spaces of tension or conflict, like that fence? What happens to the social landscape as I move through it? This chapter thus looks at the spaces of my commute as historical sites, as material and cultural objects produced by social space, and also through the lens of my everyday experience and the orientation of my gaze.

The route of the commute: evidence from an everyday walk

Parc-X

I moved to Parc-Extension (Parc-X) in 2007, after having lived in the increasingly gentrifying Mile End district for 12 years. My partner and I were finally ready to buy a house, but we'd been priced out of Mile End since real estate prices had nearly doubled in a five year period and would continue to rise. An in-depth discussion around the effects of and debates surrounding gentrification could easily be had here, but the practicality of the matter is simply that a duplex in Parc-X was about $50,000 less, only a 7 minute bus ride away from Mile End, and easily within biking or walking distance to the shops, stores, friends and activities that still linked us to our old neighbourhood.

My move became part of a larger narrative about artists affecting neighbourhoods, privilege and class, as well as centripetal versus centrifugal forces in the city. It was a centrifugal force that sent us outwards from the Mile End, searching for more affordable real estate with a back yard for the kid. This is the same force of outward migration, connected with highway infrastructures and high property values in the core, that sends many people to the suburbs. Centripetal forces, which concentrate people together (even if just briefly, as in a train station), often manifest as institutions, transportation systems, and employment areas (see Colby 1933; Dimendberg 2004). My new home, Parc-X or simply PX (as was spray-painted around the neighbourhood), was one of these areas that sprang up around factories and a train station in the early part of the 19th Century, a place for workers to live.

Parc-X developed as part of the housing boom that occurred with the growth of Montreal in the years prior to the First World War. Pierre Brassard, in "Les origines de Parc-Extension," gives an account of how the area was converted from farmland, divided into small lots by real estate speculators, and sold to families of modest income. The neighbourhood grew slowly at first, then after the construction of the Jean-Talon railway station (Park Avenue station) in 1931, it developed rapidly to accommodate workers of the factories that had been established nearby. Parc-X is one of the poorest and most diverse neighbourhoods in Montreal, with one of the highest population densities, and has been home to wave after wave of immigrant influx. Parc-X is in transition from an

identity as Little Greece to the more recent identity as Little India, although there are also many residents from Ghana, Vietnam, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Brassard 2010).

The closest French Immersion school for our kid was located in the neighbouring Town of Mont Royal (TMR), about a twenty minute walk away from our house. School buses were available to pick up and drop off children in our neighbourhood, which we decided to use in the mornings. In the afternoons, we opted for the affordable after-school daycare that was available at the school, allowing us to extend our working days by a couple of hours, and then my husband or I would have to make the trek to pick our child up. This walk was thus a commute structured by the Monday to Friday school week.

The walk started from our house in Parc-X, the bottom half of a duplex that is known colloquially as a 5 ½ (five rooms plus a bathroom). The style of the duplex was similar to most of the other duplexes and triplexes on the street, attached to each other in long rows and broken up by occasional multi-unit apartment buildings. We were on Champagneur Avenue where the number 80 bus ran often (hence, amongst the neighbourhood graffiti can be found the popular "PX80" tag).

Figure 2: 80 Av. du Parc bus and PX80 graffiti

It was less than ten minutes down St-Roch Street (named for the Saint of Plagues) to L'Acadie Boulevard, a busy six-lane street that marked the boundary between Parc-X and the neighbouring TMR. The row housing and tight grid of Parc-X continues the pattern set in Montreal's urban areas, especially the working-class neighbourhoods in the central and eastern parts of the city.

Figure 3: Open Street Map screenshot of Parc-Extension

The grid, championed by J.B. Jackson as "one of the most ambitious schemes in history for the orderly creation of landscapes, of small communities" (1980, 115), organizes space efficiently. Jackson, known as the founder of cultural landscape studies in North America, further enumerated the ways the grid system allows for flexibility and interchangeability in its usage of space, which helps to contribute to the development of the mixed-usage neighbourhoods that advocates of New Urbanism so often praise (Jacobs 1961). Indeed, Parc-X has many restaurants, bakeries, depanneurs, churches and other amenities, all in walking distance of each other. The high population density also contributes to a very social atmosphere, and, at times, friction among its very heterogeneous residents (Shinazi 2001).

Sometimes I took an alternate route through the alleys that ran parallel to St-Roch. I often did this when I didn't feel like any social contact, whether this was simply

passing someone by, having a conversation or avoiding come-ons, as would sometimes happen on the more populous route on St-Roch. At times, I preferred not having to make such minute social decisions such as smiling or not-smiling, eye-contact or none. When I walk alone, I am not conscious of my body as a social signifier. I am eyes, ears, senses of air and temperature, the feeling of feet hitting pavement. I am mediated by my camera or by my music, if I am listening through earbuds or headphones. Meeting people en-route carried the possibility of interruption, bringing me back to the body and its social signifiers of race, class and gender.

The alleys were often full of garbage. Curiously, at times I would see food left out decorously for some purpose that I wasn't aware of. Small mounds of biryani rice, fans of white bread, explosions of idlis. The neighbourhood is full of clues of the lives of others, co-existing in this one alley.

Figure 4: Parc-X alley food

Despite the garbage, alleys could be very social places, especially the long alleys that stretched north-south. Children (with or without parents) were often found playing in the alleys, and neighbours could be seen barbecuing or just sitting in their back yards. Some people would nod, smile, or say hello/bonjour. Once, a couple of children, having dinner on the back patio with their parents, pointed to me and astoundingly shouted "Chinoise! Chinoise!" I think they were Greek. But more often, my presence was not acknowledged.

The shorter alleyways that ran east-west, parallel to the busier streets, were not places of play or socializing, however. They were well-used as alternate routes to St-Roch. Our house bordered one of these alleys and at night, men urinating (or worse) on the side of it seemed to be a semi-regular occurrence. But in the day, these alleys were usually quieter than St-Roch tended to be. The alleys ended a few blocks before L'Acadie Boulevard, so there was no avoiding St-Roch unless I made a detour either a long block up or down. As one approached the end of St-Roch, the duplexes and triplexes morphed into larger apartment buildings, even highrises. And then, a six-lane almost-highway.

Crossing L'Acadie Boulevard

Named for the French Acadians who were expelled from Canada, L'Acadie Boulevard was once a smaller street called McEachran that hardly acted as any sort of border. In the 1950s, McEachran was widened, renamed, and finally, fenced.

Figure 5: Details from L'Acadie Fence photo-collage, looking into TMR

Now three lanes run in either direction, north towards the 40 highway and the land of strip malls beyond, and south where it narrows and finally ends at Beaumont Avenue and the train tracks. The three lanes are divided by a slight concrete median with towering street lamps. The wide boulevard acts as a wind tunnel during stormy days so that stepping out to cross the street is like entering a rushing river of air whipping by. Eighteen-wheelers and delivery trucks lumber past and cars accelerate, either coming off the highway or anticipating getting on. Rush hour fills up all six lanes. I would wait at the stop lights to cross, always checking first for those cars that might not stop, the ones running the red and the ones turning right impatiently. This almost highway could act as a border by itself, but on the other side, where TMR begins, there is "hardening" of boundaries in the form of a fence. In order to enter TMR from Parc-X, one has to cross this fence.

Figure 6: Details from L'Acadie Fence photo-collage, looking into Parc-X

Through the fence to TMR

J.B. Jackson thought highly of fences in general, stating that "a boundary is what binds us all together in a group, that which excludes the outsider or stranger. The boundary creates neighbours; it is the symbol of law and order and permanence" (115). A fence allows us to balance the private and the public to the degree that each of us is comfortable. A good backyard fence is essential if one values a modicum of privacy in a densely populated neighbourhood such as Parc-X. And in the summertime, fences extend small living spaces to the outdoors, making the private more public as the neighbours move out into their backyards. High wooden fences, or wire fences with plastic weavings, imply that the owners do not want to see their neighbours; open wire fences invite interaction. I know most well those neighbours whose fences I can see through.

Lucy Maynard Salmon took the opposite view to Jackson's. Salmon was a historian who began writing in the late 1800s, one of the earliest researchers to take on the local as an important site of analysis. She argued that fences mean "isolation, separation, and lack of common interest; the absence of the fence means community life, mutual aid, toleration, and joint pleasures and opportunities" (2001, 79). Clearly, the whys and wherefores of fences greatly influence whether they are useful or detrimental. The majority of fences in this city are relatively benign, and indeed, simply practical.

The fence on L'Acadie Boulevard does not seem benign, for almost as soon as it was built, it was subject to controversies that have become part of its story. It was erected in June of 1960 by the TMR council, who had been petitioned by residents worried for their children's safety on the busy L'Acadie Boulevard (di Cintio 2011). Later that year, an article dated December 20th 1960 appeared in the *Montreal Star*, describing a letter sent to TMR from the City of Montreal. The letter asks that the fence be removed as "the citizens of Montreal have been greatly offended" by its "unsightly" appearance (Gravenor 2007). Marcello di Cintio, in his article "The Great Wall of Montreal," details further controversies: A group of 300 students from the Université de Montréal, in 1971, tried to pull the fence down with their cars; the fence gates were padlocked every Hallowe'en, a practice that began in the 1990s and stopped only in 2002. "The barrier has been referred to as 'apartheid fencing' and 'Montreal's Berlin Wall,'" notes di Cintio. This statement is a little hyperbolic, perhaps, for there are no guards, no barbed wire. Yet, it is obvious that for many, the fence functions as a clear symbol of division between the rich and the poor. The two neighbourhoods on either side are a study in contrast in themselves, one being a middle class, suburban enclave, the other a densely populated immigrant ghetto. It could be said that the fence simply spatializes the divisions already there.

TMR has an especially well-documented history as one of Canada's first experiments in urban planning. L.D. McCann's article "Planning and building the corporate suburb of Mount Royal, 1910–1925" (1996) relates that TMR was designed by Frederic Gage Todd (1876–1948), a disciple of Frederick Law Olmsted, and considered to be Canada's first landscape architect. Todd modeled the design of TMR according to Olmsted's City Beautiful ideas, and was influenced as well by the Garden City and Garden

Suburb movements, all of which emphasized the importance of architecture and urban planning to promote a harmonious social order through beautification and greenery. TMR was also conceived as a model city on the initiative of the Canadian Northern Railway, and this is reflected throughout the town's architecture and street names. The town's central diagonal boulevards mimic those of Washington, D.C., another city built upon Garden City principles. McCann also points to how in TMR, like in Westmount, NDG, and Outremont, builders began to respond to a demand for single owner-occupied, detached residences that saw a clear break with the renter-occupied row housing that defined the rest of urban Montreal.

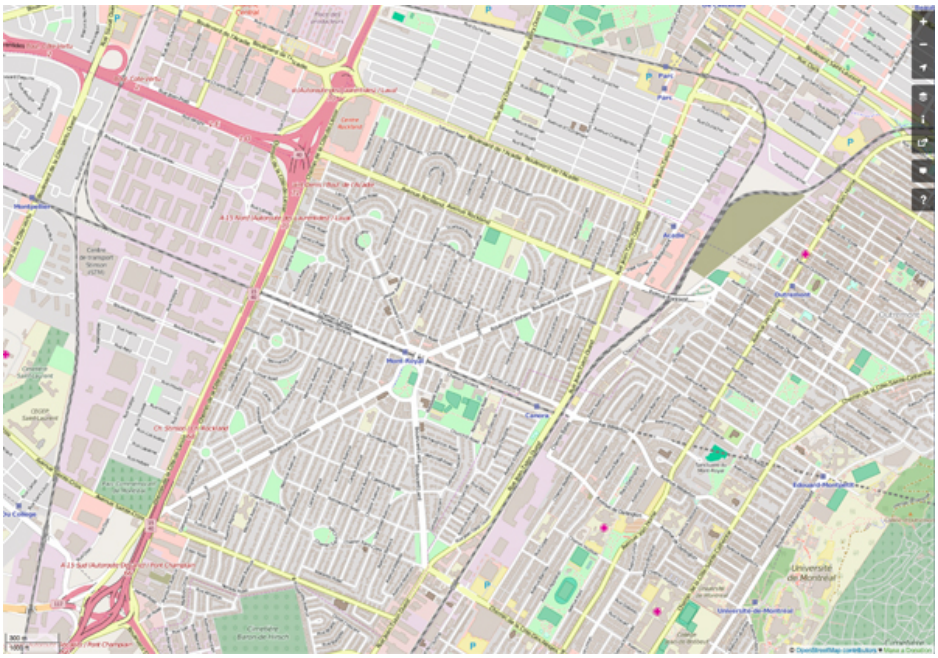

Figure 7: Open Street Map screenshot of TMR

TMR was designed as an attempt to manifest the middle-class suburban desire to be at a remove from the city, and to incorporate "curving streets, spacious lots, small parks, and other countryside amenities – all radical features at the time" (McCann 276). Although much of TMR is actually a looser, modified grid, the two diagonals that slice across the town and meet at the center, and the series of cul-de-sacs at the edges, contribute to the impression that TMR is built on curves, in contrast with the tight grid on which the rest of the city is built. Curves are a manifestation of the suburban ideal,

working to present an oasis in contrast with the rest of the city. The wide lawns and hedges in place of fences contribute to the appearance of flowing green space that is widely associated with the upper-middle class suburb (Jurkow 2000, 5). The appearance of the suburb is strictly controlled through by-laws, a strategy used by many communities, including exclusive gated ones.

Setha Low (2006) shows how private property designed around public spaces, such as parks, can serve effectively to keep the public out, through walls and fences but also special policing, quiet laws, and suburban street designs such as the "cul-de-sac." Although she is specifically looking at gated communities in the United States, many of her observations find parallels in the fenced-off community of TMR. For example, Low looks at how gated communities control and regulate the aesthetics of the landscape and architecture through zoning by-laws and homeowner associations. She notes that some residents in California have attempted to deregulate these strictly-controlled environments with little success. Similarly, TMR has implemented a Site Planning and Architectural Integration Program (known as PIIA, its French acronym), which ensures "the preservation and development of quality architecture and landscaping in harmony with the Town's built heritage in all areas where housing is allowed" (http://www.town.mount-royal.qc.ca/index.php?id=135&L=ownnvtvfxuu).

In TMR, the low population density means that chance meetings with strangers are relatively rare. Because residential areas are separate from service areas, TMR residents rely on their cars. There are no metro stops within TMR borders and bus service is poor. There are no depanneurs or any other commercial businesses in walking distance, unless one lives close to the center or its outer edges. But because there is little traffic on its winding streets, the neighbourhood is a great place for strolling, jogging, and biking, although it is very easy to get lost. The cul-de-sacs strewn along the edges of the town make for a disorienting, confusing exploration, and of course, this is part of their function, to discourage traffic. They also work along with other elements of "taste regulation" (lawn maintenance, architectural restrictions, and other such by-laws), which discourage diversity in income groups, making for a more homogenous community (Low 87).

The histories of these two neighbourhoods show that they both developed according to specific ideas around the spatialization of class. The grid versus curves dichotomy illustrates one way in which urban planning shapes the social atmosphere of each neighbourhood, one as a designed and planned model city specifically for the middle-class, the other as an "unplanned" expansion selling to working-class families. These two different histories reflect the impact of design, urban planning, and imagination on the built environment, as well as on the embodied sensory experience of moving from the one neighbourhood to the other. The change in ambiance is pronounced.

Figure 8: Parc-X street and TMR lawns

Each day, I walked from Parc-X and its noisy, social atmosphere, with its plethora of different languages and its many amenities on St-Roch, its cars and garbage, into TMR, quiet and suburban, lush with tall, mature trees and green flowing grass. In the spring, no kidding, I have seen rabbits hopping across the lawns and sunning themselves. In the fall, piles of autumn leaves are gathered on the lawns, awaiting pick up by city trucks, and in the winter, the roads are plowed soon after heavy snowfall. All the houses in this part of TMR (not all areas are like this) have landscaped yards, with large garages and driveways for each, and sometimes pools can be glimpsed in the back yards. There are no alleyways behind these houses, no detritus or food left out, no graffiti. On a newly poured curb, however, someone has written "PX" in the concrete when it was still wet, evidence of intrusion from across the fence, or a defiant claim on the street.

Figure 9: PX was here

Each day, passing through the fence into TMR felt a little like trespassing into another world. All the way to my son's school, I felt slightly out of place. Each day, I began to realize that the change in ambiance was heightened by the presence of that fence. It became a site of curiosity for me, for I had heard rumours and stories about it

from neighbours, particularly about the padlocking of the gates on Hallowe'en. It had emotions attached to it, of eyesore, of "gatedness" and privilege. It was an offence of a fence. It was TMR that had put up the fence up, ostensibly to protect the children, though only TMR children, as there is no fence to protect those on the Parc-X side. I began to research it and how it had become a symbol of class separation. How was this symbol thus constructed? Would it be the same symbol if it were made from another material? What else might be said about it? I walked different lengths of the fence when I had the time to do so, taking photos throughout the different seasons, looking at its materiality and its meaning. In this way, the fence led me to a detour around it, a challenge to know this border and why it was there.

Detouring around the fence: an examination of a border

In her landmark essay of 1915, "History in a Back Yard," Salmon offers a typology of fences. She looks at the associations built into different kinds of fences, the materials, and the reasons for being built. For example, she writes that if "a high hedge is selected to mark the boundary lines, it suggests not only a love of retirement and contemplation, but a desire for protection from dust… it also renders a secondary service of beauty scarcely less important than its primary one of indicating boundary lines. But, after all, wall and fence and hedge are but outward symbols of a crude method of marking private ownership" (2001, 77-78). What do the fence and hedge read here?

Evidence #1: The Hedge

Figure 10: the L'Acadie Fence hedge

The rusty chain-link fence runs along L'Acadie Boulevard, nearly the entire length of the two neighbourhoods, hidden by a green and leafy hedge in the summer, exposed through the bare branches in the winter. It is about two metres high, approximately 1.6 kilometres long, and has only six gates, not necessarily located at the street intersections where one might think would be the logical spot for an opening.

Because of the hedge, the fence is not always immediately visible. The hedge grows on both sides of it, which, as Salmon purported, helps to screen out dust and dirt flying up from the traffic on L'Acadie, and also hides the fence itself, which is made of wire. The hedge suggests the need to beautify what would otherwise be unsightly. And indeed, this view is supported by this quote from *La Presse*, dated January 18th, 1962 (translated):

Prominent people in the Town of Mount Royal, including Mayor Reginald Dawson, have started to regret the famous fence which divides the east side of the city along L'Acadie Boulevard. At a landlord association meeting of the independent

municipality… Mr. William Tetley said that "everywhere we go in Montreal they talk to us about the fence." He added that the wall is a terrible symbol. As a result he proposes that the height of the fence be reduced from six to three feet and that it be pulled back two feet within the city limits and that it be hidden by bushes (Gravenor 2007).

This comment begs the question, if the fence needed to be hidden, then why have a fence at all? Would a hedge on its own not be enough? Certainly it would serve the same purpose of protection and demarcation. One answer might be that a hedge cannot serve as a gate.

Evidence #2: Gates

Figure 11: L'Acadie Fence gate at Jarry St.

Let's take a closer look at the gates in the fence: there are six and they act as the only points of access between the two neighbourhoods along this 1.6 kilometre stretch of L'Acadie Boulevard. The gates are located near Rue de Liege on its northern end and Rue Jean-Talon at its southern end, at the Parc-X intersections of Jarry, St-Roch, and Olgivy, and one – seemingly randomly – in between Olgivy and St-Roch. The two remaining intersections at Avenue Ball and at Avenue d'Anvers do not have gates, probably

because there are no pedestrian crosswalks here. More access points would certainly be welcome though. When the fence was first built, there was only one pedestrian opening, and more gates were added through the years (di Cintio 2011). In addition, the gate at major intersection of Rue Jarry is the only one that features a cage-like structure, making it more difficult for bicycles to pass through. All the gates are rusty and heavy, constructed from wire and steel posts, and they clang loudly when they swing shut. They are not what I would call friendly.

Evidence #3: A hole in the fence

Figure 12: A hole in the L'Acadie Fence

Although there is no gate in the fence at the intersection of Ball and L'Acadie, it seems that there should be. There are no stoplights or crosswalks here, but some people cross anyways, hurrying across the six lanes of busy traffic. Montreal is a city where jaywalking is a normal part of pedestrian culture. It seems natural that someone, wanting to cross the fence at Avenue Ball, rather than having to walk the long block up to the gate at Jarry or down to St-Roch, would cut a hole in the fence. This hole at Ball is the only one that I can detect, the only challenge to the fence's control of access. But the hole is patched up now, and so far, no further attempts have been made to open it –

unlike the ongoing battles further south at the Mile End railway crossings, where that fence has been cut open and patched innumerable times and in several different spots, and where a citizens' campaign is underway for a level crossing to be built (Heffez 2010a). If the hole in the L'Acadie Fence were to be made bigger, or opened again and again, would the authorities finally put in a gate? What challenges can affect the materialities of the Fence? There does not seem to be the same willpower or need here as in Mile End, where people seem more politically engaged with the urban landscape. Here, the quiet challenge of a hole in the fence can go almost unnoticed.

Evidence #4: Signs

Figure 13: L'Acadie Fence gate signs, both sides, at St-Roch St.

The first photos that I took of the fence were the signs. I saw one day that the sign on the gate at St-Roch Street, where I normally crossed to enter TMR, had been altered. Normally, it read "Cette porte vise à améliorer la sécurité des piétons et des enfants" ("This door has been installed to improve the safety of pedestrians and children"). Naturally, it was easily changed to read: "Cette porte vise à améliorer la *séparation* des *riches* et des *pauvres*" ("This door has been installed to improve the *separation* of *the rich* and *the poor*"). I laughed when I saw it, because it seemed to state the obvious. Although I had crossed the fence many times before and noted the differences in ambiance and

architecture, the layout of the streets and the greenery, this was one of the first clues in the fence itself that betrayed a general suspicion about its purpose.

There are signs on both sides of the gate. Going into TMR, the sign, in English and French, says, "Welcome. This door has been installed to improve safety of pedestrians and children. Please make sure you close it after you. Town of Mont Royal." On leaving TMR, the sign says the same thing, but instead of "Welcome," it says simply, "Be Careful." This posits the interior of TMR as a safe space, the exterior as filled with various dangers, the busy boulevard being only one of many. People have taken issue with this, attacking the signs themselves through graffiti and general defacement, usually to the sign that warns "Be Careful." The dichotomy between the two sides of the signs belies the stated intention of simple protection (from what, exactly, is not stated). It enforces instead the perceived view of the fence as a barrier to separate the rich from the poor (the sign's alteration was cleaned up within days of its appearance).

Evidence #5: Empty

Figure 14: Both sides of the fence

During nearly three years of almost daily walks to and from TMR, never once have I seen children playing on the streets near the Fence. Indeed, the street closest to the fence in TMR functions as a cushion to block the sights and sounds of L'Acadie Boulevard. Nothing is located there. No houses actually face this street or the Fence. There are only back yards and side yards, each with their own fence or hedge. Sometimes I glimpse

swimming pools through the back yard fences, though they seem rarely used. None of these fences are chain-link. In the front yards and on the sidewalks, I sometimes see landscapers tending to gardens, mothers and strollers out for a walk, joggers, or groups of high school kids after school. Usually, however, the streets are empty. Where are the people that the fence is protecting?

Evidence #6: Where the sidewalk ends

Figure 15: Footprints on the dirt path by the L'Acadie Fence

The street and sidewalk curve away here, but there is a dirt path worn in, visible even more in the snow. These are the footprints of people headed to and from Metro L'Acadie, just outside the TMR borders. These patterns of circulation show what is important to those who use the landscape, especially pedestrians and cyclists, and what the urban planners have ignored.

Evidence #7: Places for padlocks

Figure 16: A place for a lock on the fence

The question is, why would a fence such as this ever need to be locked? To lock out. On Hallowe'en, for instance. From the 1990s to 2002, the L'Acadie fence was padlocked on Hallowe'en night, ostensibly to discourage Parc-X children from trick-or-treating or vandalizing in TMR, all in the name of "protection" (di Cintio 2011). This highlights the use of "protection" as a discourse to delimit the boundaries of public spaces and their usage. Rosalyn Deutsche, in her essay "Agoraphobia" (1996), used a singular example to illustrate how "public" is not an all-inclusive term. She examined a story that was run in 1991 in the *New York Times* about a small public park in Greenwich Village, its rehabilitation from dilapidation, and its subsequent padlocking at night to keep out the homeless. Jackson Park, the little plaza at the center of the story, became the focus of an upper-middle class neighbourhood group, "Friends of Jackson Park," which was welcomed by the City Parks Department as "public" help in "protecting public

space" (276). Through this example, Deutsche argued that the term "public" does not include the economically disadvantaged.

There are pertinent parallels between the padlocking of Jackson Square and the L'Acadie Fence, both as "protective" measures. TMR officials basically defined Parc-X kids as vandals while TMR kids were not. In effect, Parc-X children were also discouraged from trick-or-treating in the wealthier neighbourhood. For whatever reasons, whether cultural or economic, Hallowe'en is not an especially popular holiday in Parc-X. Only a few houses are ever decorated, whereas in TMR, on each street immediately adjacent to L'Acadie Boulevard, there are several houses with at times rather impressive Hallowe'en displays, indicating participation in the yearly ritual of trick-or-treating. It seems natural that kids would want to cross over to TMR, and in the past, they simply went around the padlocked Fence. Though the Fence's gates are no longer padlocked on Hallowe'en, the past lingers in the public's memory. Many of the parents with small children in Parc-X do consider crossing over to TMR now, though in conversation, some of them have expressed their feelings that they were "unwanted" in that neighbourhood, and that perhaps they would just stay in Parc-X. The locks are a main focal point of the Fence's symbolism, the one feature that says most clearly how divisive it is, all in the name of "protection."

Other boundaries

Many city councillors on both sides of the Fence, as well as one TMR mayor, have wanted to take the fence down, but still it stands. As Jackson (1980) notes, fences are often used to derive identity from a shared landscape, to maintain a view of inner suburban cohesion against the outsider, against the city. Indeed, the "Townies," as TMR residents are known as colloquially, seem to have no problem with the Fence. The gates were removed in 2002 after the Hallowe'en padlocking became a scandal, but were reinstated in 2005 after demands were made at Town Council. Pierre Bourque, mayor of Montreal from 1994 to 2001, observed "the people of TMR seem to have some sort of psychological need" for the Fence (di Cintio 2011). Whether this psychological need pertains to so-called safety or protection issues, or to deep-seated fears and prejudices

against the economically disadvantaged, is in the end irrelevant. The perceived function of the Fence, as read through its history and its materiality, has marked the urban landscape emotionally as a symbol of discrimination.

Boundaries are not always marked with fences. For example, Parc-X and TMR are within the same school zone, the borders of which are drawn up by the English Montreal School Board (EMSB), and this is the reason that I encounter the fence almost daily. The school zone therefore brings certain residents of TMR and Parc-X together, resulting in contact that would otherwise not occur. This contact remains based in the politics of language, for only people who fit the rather narrow criteria of the EMSB are permitted access to English schools. Under Quebec law, immigrants from any country, even English speaking ones such as the United States, must attend French schools. This means that at my son's school, the great diversity of Parc-X is filtered out to a large extent. Thus, although the school zone boundaries are broad enough to suggest possibilities of engagement across the Fence, in my experience, this contact has been relatively superficial, perhaps because of other factors such as class and income. These sociological considerations, however interesting, take us beyond the space of this particular endeavour.

Just as boundaries can be soft or hard, so too can fences. Imagine if the wire and steel posts were taken down. The hedges could remain to provide the sense of safety that TMR residents obviously seek. But the rusty metal doors, which are long overdue for maintenance, could be replaced by, say, wooden gates, perhaps painted a dark green to form a continuous flow with the hedge. There would not and should not be padlocks on the gates because these neighbourhoods themselves are not private property. These are just some suggestions towards (re)envisioning the fence that takes into account the larger borders and the different boundaries that join the two neighbourhoods, rather than divide them. Parc-X is open to TMR for all of its amenities, its many restaurants, and its dépanneurs. TMR is a green space for Parc-X. Neighbours should share the neighbourhood, because we are, after all, neighbours.

School zone boundaries provide suggestions into how we can read the different functions of borders, how more or less arbitrary they often are, and how we might imagine other ways to view the L'Acadie Fence. In a Thirdspace analysis, spatiality and

historicity combine with sociality to find a politically charged edge, and a way to perhaps engage and effect social change. Here is the space that takes into account the direct experiences of everyday life, and the space that questions and challenges power dynamics. Soja also placed art here, where the real and imagined, or "things and thought," are on equal terms, making the space fertile for the growth of counterspaces, "spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (1996, 68). There is a strong activist element underlying Soja's formulations of Thirdspace.

What kinds of Thirdspace actions might make the fence more visible through its camouflage of hedge? The graffiti and defacements to the signs are one form of challenge, as is the hole in the Fence. Art can certainly act as another challenge, perhaps through such practices as yarn-bombing, guerilla signage, and performance. For instance, the British group Irational (artists Kayle Brandon and Heath Bunting), with their project *Tour de Fence*, climbs fences internationally as a conflation of détournement and bricolage, thus making use of whatever materials are on hand to "hijack" and re-designate the original meaning. According to a booklet documenting one of their workshops, "tour de fence enables you to surmount the fences out there that people erect to obstruct your way every day. from wire netting to rustic fence, from steel door to close security system, tour de fence offers you the necessary know-how for unhampered movement" (O'Rourke 2013, 65). Some of their techniques include "wall climb with sign suspension," "stretched wire cling," and "tree to air" (64). Irational were even invited to Montreal and on their website (http://www.irational.org/fence/TDF/tdf_montreal/), mention the L'Acadie fence as a case study, though it seems they did not journey out to actually climb it (all the photo-documentation shows them in Old Montreal and downtown).

As Karen O'Rourke notes, to climb a fence as an art project is "a humorous but pointed way to reclaim public space from private encroachment," though this light-hearted type of challenge suggests an absence of a real threat (65). Although I have not seen many instances of artistic challenge on the fence itself, these examples indicate some possibilities. To move forward, however, a particularly pressing question is how to affect more concrete changes where needed, not just to sites such as the L'Acadie Fence,

but to our built environment in general. A personal practice of the commute could provide the knowledge and imagination for change, but needs to be paired with action as well. With the photo-collage mural of the fence, I also hope to open up another space where my everyday familiar is made strange, and where social and material history become evident in everyday life. Perhaps with the accumulation of many actions, social, political, and artistic, something will give way towards the change that is looked for.

On the way home

Returning to Parc-X each day with my son in tow, we would enjoy walking under the trees of TMR on the way back, their shade and their changing colours. Crossing the fence and leaving TMR felt like a bit like coming out of a huge terrarium, and back into the noisy, chaotic city. We would be walking against the rush hour waves of workers getting off the 80 bus and walking towards their homes or stopping at the corner groceries that lined St-Roch Street. Sometimes we would stop and pick up some vegetables for dinner, or a popsicle if it was a hot day.

This particular walking commute was not, of course, the only route that was part of my daily life. There were regular trips to the bank, the big corporate grocery store that we shopped at more often that we really would have liked, the corner stores or "deps," the parks and the swimming pool. It is only through walking the neighbourhood on these routes that I have actually met my neighbours. When I walk with my young son in tow, some of our elderly neighbours would say hello to him. One old Greek gentleman, whenever he saw us, would always give him a two dollar coin for a chocolate bar, insisting in spite of our attempts to refuse. Elderly Greek ladies have asked me if my mixed-race son was mine, because, "you know, your hair is different." A very friendly teenaged Pakistani boy who lived down the alley kept up a steady stream of chatter about his life each time we saw him. Other people have their influence on my walking. I might cross the street upon seeing the man with the large dog coming my way, or the crowd of rambunctious teenagers, or the mother with the large stroller who needs more room on the sidewalk.

In fine weather, we added bicycles to the routines, which more or less cut down social sidewalk interactions to nearly nothing. A whole other set of communications began: looking for pedestrians, judging whether to use the sidewalk on busy streets, making eye contact with drivers to see if they had seen you or if they were going to run you over. Embodied pleasure in speed and navigation. A whole other set of concerns took over, though the end points were the same: which streets have steeper hills or more traffic? Which streets are one-way? On a bicycle, one is supposed to behave as a car, although we rarely do this with my young son who mostly rides on the sidewalks. There are the other wheels that he likes to take as well: his scooter, his skateboard. A lot of kids play in the alleys with their bikes and he plays with them, though he doesn't speak their languages, Urdu or French.

Figure 17: Playing in the alley

Parc-X is dense with people living beside and on top of one another. There is a lot of "bumping into alterity" as Doreen Massey would say (2005, 94), with Montreal's most diverse population packed into a small grid of a neighbourhood. Each of our encounters with others is a small story, and they accumulate with time, adding to the story-strata of place, and of home. A practice of deep mapping the daily commute is thus necessarily

concerned with stories about everyday encounters with our neighbours that we meet on our daily routines, as well as about the histories of why and how something came to be. Each route and routine presents countless clues, evidence of stories-so-far that hold a place together. Deep knowledge also invites future imaginings of what might be, and how.

Walking through one's own neighbourhood with camera or other tools or even just open and attentive eyes, either on a daily commute or a psychogeographic wander, is certainly a good place to start. The heightened attention that results from the investigative eye can alert you to clues in the urban landscape as to sites of conflict, historical narrative, or aesthetic pleasure. Artistic practices, stories, narratives of place are particularly good tools to engage a wider public and to highlight these layers of history and imagination, thus making ways for detours to the usual routine.

Interchapter Two

City Transit

(the performative detour)

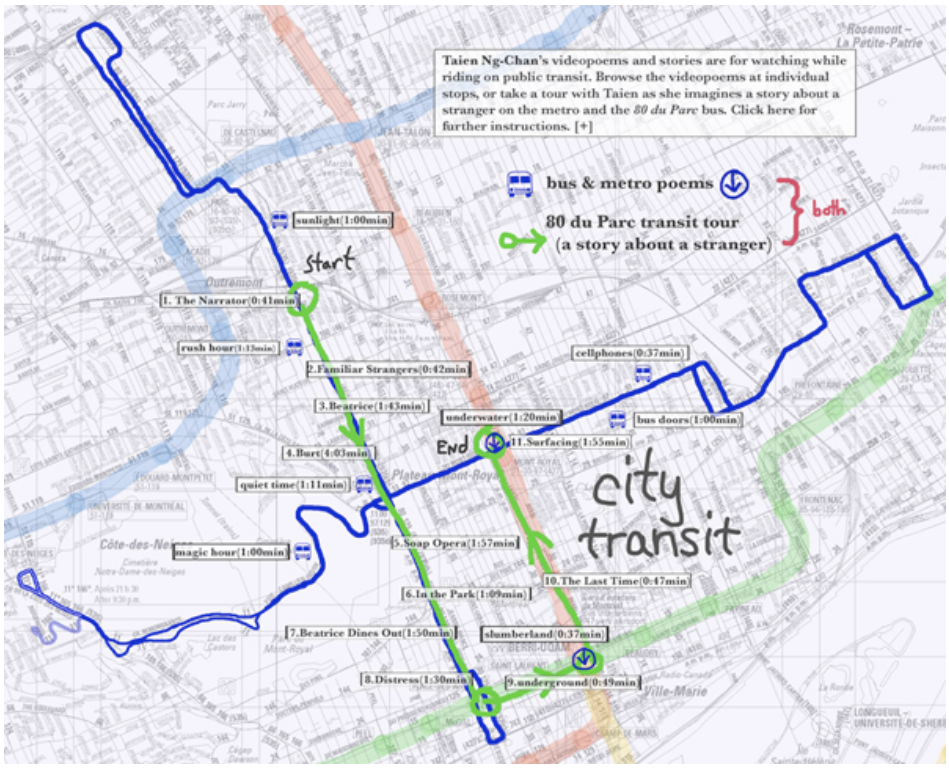

Figure 18: *City Transit* digital map interface

The daily commute is a liminal space of in-between, one that can provide the gift of time to daydream, decompress, or detour. The conjoining of two main elements of city transit, solitude and mobile media, makes the perfect space to engage in a poetic and cinematic practice. *City Transit* is composed of short videopoems and stories that were shot on the buses and metros that I took every day, particularly my commuting routes such as the 80 Av. du Parc, which took me from my home in Parc-X to the downtown core. Equally, depending on mood, I would take the metro from du Parc Station on the Blue Line, transfer to the Orange and then to the Green Lines. It took roughly the same amount of time.

For a while, each trip became a gathering session. While I tended to take still photos during the walking commute, the moving bus meant that things kept moving even when I stayed still, so video became my preferred media. On the bus, I used my cell phone to slyly capture behaviours and events like people sleeping, reading, on their cell phones, or sunlight moving across the bus seats. I took video on the lowest resolution, blown up to emphasize the noise and the glitches of the digital format as a form of abstraction and to de-emphasize individuality. I travelled with my eyes and ears open, always looking for images to shoot, or interesting sounds. The images began to categorize themselves: sleepers, readers, headphones, cell-phones. I began to notice how the light changed throughout the day on the bus, how the metro induced more people into sleep. I listened to conversations, cellphone rings, engine noises. Taking public transportation each day became a practice of seeing, listening, concentrating, sitting. This practice of gathering images is similar to the one used during the walking commute, for the act of looking, framing, and composing changed my relationship to the urban environment and the way I saw the city. The resulting archive is both documentary and poetic in nature. Over a period of about 2 years, I collected around 200 short cellphone and digital camera videos, as well as 30-40 sound recordings.

In addition to the act of documentation, I add imaginative fiction. I turn the space of social performance into a theatrical performance by staging a narrative. The idea for the story came to me a long time ago from a brief glimpse of a woman with a black eye that I saw on the bus, sitting at the back and wearing a thin blue coat. Something about her made me want to ask if she was okay, but I didn't. What responsibility does one have for another? The question came back to me often. There were familiar strangers that I saw occasionally on the bus or around the neighbourhood, had seen them around for years but had never met them. I had fragments of stories for them as well. These imaginings were also parts of the strata of place. For my MFA, I worked with Super 8 and 16mm film and built cardboard sets to tell the story about the woman with the black eye. Along with fictional encounters, for which I brought actors and friends onto the bus to film, I also made a series of videopoems, many of which developed out of cell phone videos from my documentary archive of common behaviours and atmospheres found in transit. I wanted

to find a way to bring together my diverse interests in exploring sound, text, voice, image. I experimented with filming and editing as though I were writing a poem, playing with stanza breaks, repetition, metaphor, alliteration. Some elements are common to both poetry and film: imagery, voice, rhythm. For the *City Transit* map, these poems and story fragments are laid out on hand-drawn routes over a bus map from the STM (Société de transport de Montréal). One can choose only the video poems, the narrative about the woman with the black eye, or both of these together.

When I became interested in geo-locating these fictions and videopoems to some of the places and bus routes where they were filmed, this idea became the basis of a larger work. *City Transit* is the work officially included in this thesis project, but it resides as part of a larger work that I began working on in 2012 in residency with Agence TOPO, the Montreal artist-run centre for new media. *Detours: Poetics of the City* was a collaborative, multimedia website project, produced with the idea of mapping the ephemeral and very local, the mundane and poetic details of everyday spaces. I had met several artists whose work with the city I found resonated with my own, and I invited them to create a map with me. While a commuter rarely has the need for a map, these maps offered the opportunity to virtually detour from the normal routine, even during the usual routine, as they are meant to be viewed in situ, in the places where they were created, such as on the bus.

Detours is aligned with such projects as Jake Barton's *City of Memory* and *[murmur],* or the poetic maps in Denis Wood's *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas.* (2011). The atlas view is the third of Castro's cartographic shapes, which refers not only to a collection or archive of images that aim to convey geographical knowledge and history, but is also "a means to organize visual knowledge. In other words, atlases refer as much to a strictly cartographic instrument as to a graphical means for the assemblage and combination—if not montage—of images" (13). As Christian Jacob points out in his book *The Sovereign Map* (2006), the similarities between the author of an atlas and the editor of a film reside in their use of such elements as framing, rhythm, focus, a sense of progression, and structure. The atlas view gives us the building blocks of cinema: time, sequence, and story.

Detours is an atlas that includes both the archive of images related to place-based knowledge, edited and organized for poetic effect, and cinema in the form of short videopoems, geolocated to the places – and the routes – where they originated. The main interface of the website shows the different maps as layered coloured rectangles corresponding to the geographic areas covered, referring to the overhead grid map perspective, as well as to the technique of "layering." Corner illustrates this concept as "a mosaic-like field of multiple orders, not unlike the combination of different coloured paint delineations for the playing of games superimposed on a gymnasium floor. One layer becomes legible only through the lens of the game or rules of use that apply to it" (Corner 235). Clicking on the different areas of the interface in *Detours* would then load the associated map layer, with content exploring the street level or the tour. This works in a parallel – or a detour – of Google Maps and Google Street View.

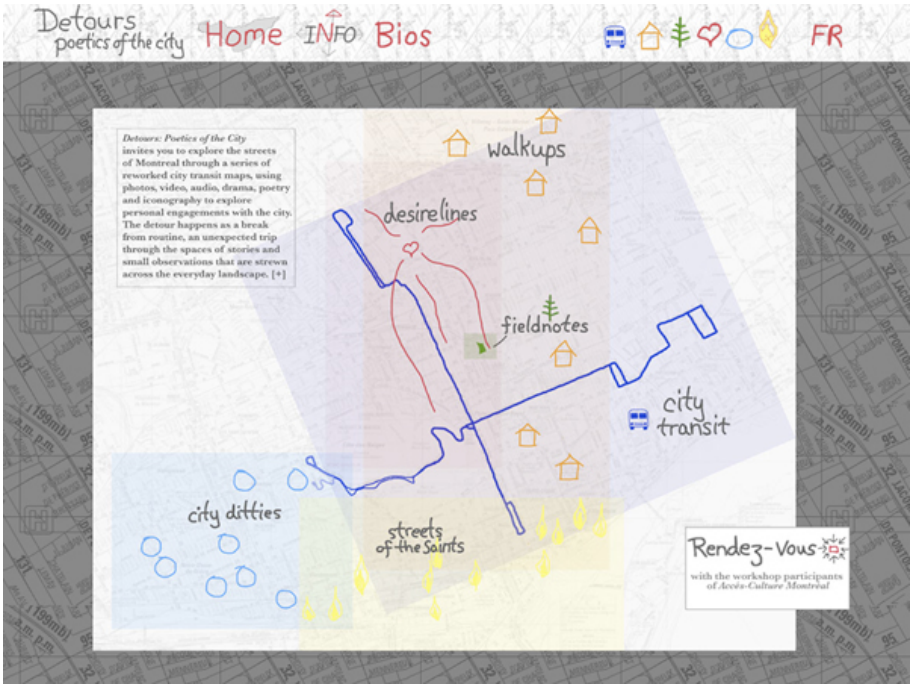

Figure 19: *Detours* main digital interface with layered maps

The "graphic system," including the field, scale, and symbology of the maps (Corner 229) originated in the city transit commute, as the atlas was made with repurposed digital city transit maps from the Societé de Transport de Montréal (STM). The city transit maps were downloaded from the STM website, brought into a vector illustration

program and “flattened” so that only the bare outlines showed. To contrast against the usual “grid map” aesthetic, most often that of Google Maps, I devised a system of drawing by hand, digitally, using a stylus pen and iPad. Aesthetics can be an important element in detouring the map.

My other map-layer contribution, *Streets of the Saints,* is a playful melding of geography, hagiography and poetry (with the help of Byzantine iconographer Adrian Gorea). Initially, I traced all the streets in Montreal that are named after saints (though the map presents mainly the downtown areas where most of these streets are concentrated) and I wrote ten short poems about certain saints: St-Laurent who was grilled, St-Denis who had his head chopped off, Ste-Catherine who was tortured on a wheel that bears her name… This map refers to the city-image of Montreal as a place of Roman-Catholicism, with its illuminated cross on the mountain, its many, many churches and saints, and includes a videopoem that wonders if one could drive through this city taking only streets with the names of saints.

Many of the other map-layers were also produced through movement, including *Desirelines* by Donna Akrey, who mapped the dirt paths that she encountered in her walking and bicycling commutes through the city. Emilie O'Brien's *Field Notes* invokes Maguire Meadows, a beloved “terrain vague” aka “Le champ des possibles,” and the site of her daily walks. Samuel Thulin’s *City Ditties* were made – literally – in places that he encountered often in his neighbourhood (he set himself the task of composing in situ on a smart phone). Each of his “ditties” were made in a single session, using only environmental sounds recorded while moving through these places, and influenced by variables of time and place such as the weather and time of day. The *Walkups* map-layer located excerpts from writer Lance Blomgren's book *Walkups*, about absurdities in the lives and dwellings of Montrealers, each written for a specific address in Montreal. These were mapped out to musician Gord Allen's sound explorations that evoked the rooms and ambiances of these dwellings. I collaborated with each of these artists in defining the “graphic field” and establishing the rules or systems of their mapping focus.

The final map of the project, *Rendez-vous*, was produced in collaboration with the participants of Accés Culture Montreal's "cultural mediation" workshops, as part of the 2012 Biennale internationale d'art numérique. I gave mapping workshops with my collaborators at four different Maisons de la culture across Montreal, where we worked with different age groups from six to sixty-five to produce personal maps of their neighbourhoods. These were relational mapping workshops, involving, for instance, the mapping of textures and colours in everyday places for the children, or narrative story-mapping of memories for the elderly. Participants discussed their own personal engagements with the city as ways to generate and pass on knowledge, and this became the true meaning of the experience. The importance of engaging with community brings us again to the ideas of space and place as physical locations of interaction, and to the process of relating. This kind of mapping is open-ended and concerned with relationships, actions and interconnections, tending towards the rhizomatic. Corner notes that the rhizome mapping technique, based in Deleuze and Guattari's "lines of flight" and diverse entryways and exits, is indeterminate, allowing for "a plurality of readings, uses and effects" (244). The *Detours* atlas as a whole is similarly open, flexible, and able to connect in a multitude of ways, "a form of systematic montage, where multiple and independent layers are incorporated as a synthetic composite" (245).

Detours was originally conceived to be a work of mobile media, accessible through and optimized for tablet computers, smart phones and headphones (and as such, would have benefited from the use of GPS technology, which unfortunately was not part of the development plan). The works presented are optimally viewed or listened to in the places that inspired them. The originating map, *City Transit*, aims to layer stories and poems over the particular spaces of urban travel in Montreal, to possibly give the viewers a sense of aesthetic and narrative pleasure that might even change how they look at their fellow passengers on the bus or metro. From a different angle, the accompanying essay, through an exploration of the everyday social performances and the performative liminality of transit, aims to do the same.

Chapter Two: The Transit Commute

> In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphorai*. To go to work or come home, one takes a "metaphor"—a bus or train. Stories could also take this noble name: Every day, they traverse and organize places…
>
> Michel de Certeau (1984, 115)

As de Certeau notes above, buses and trains can be excellent methods for making meaning out of the repetitions of daily life. Like so many people in Montreal, whenever I went into the downtown core for work or school, I took city transit. In fact, a full two thirds of people who work or study in downtown Montréal commute via public transportation (Heffez 2010b). There are few other places in the city, where, if one must commute, one is forced into such close proximity to strangers for extended periods of time, captive audience to advertising and to city streets going by outside the bus windows, and subject to the smell of bodies, food, the mustiness of wet clothes on rainy days. One is forced to endure the rudeness of other people's cell phone conversations or too-loud music emanating through headphones. Each journey has its variations and its constants. The routine enacts a gathering of knowledge about the city, each variation and event added to an ever-growing archive that becomes one's personal story of place.

Unlike the walking commute, which invites close engagement with the urban landscape, the predominant mode of the transit commute looks more like disengagement, or perhaps non-engagement since it occurs in a non-place, after Marc Augé's conception of spaces "which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity" (1995, 63). Instead of Walter Benjamin's detective figure, the primary roles are that of the prone passenger and the spectator. As David Bissell and Gillian Fuller note in their introduction to *Stillness in a Mobile World*: "The new mobilities turn has inaugurated the figure of the passenger – the person moving through a contingent space from here to there; the mixed and anonymous denizen of the non-place – as a replacement for the roving figure of the Flâneur as an emblem of modernity" (2011, 8). However, the non-place is seldom found in pure form. As Augé points out,

"places reconstitute themselves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it" (1995, 64). Thus, given the proper mindset and framework of practice, non-place can be full of significance and non-engagement can be a very active mode of being, no less embodied than walking or any other method of mobility.

The situation of being a passenger on city transit is unique and full of contradiction. As passengers in what can be extremely compressed social spaces, people often create their own bubbles to isolate the self from contact, through print media such as books or daily commuter papers (Straw 2007), and through mobile electronic media such as cell phones, MP3 players and other handheld devices (Bissell 2009; Adey 2010; Bull 2000, 2007). Within these bubbles of liminal space, private everyday rituals are enacted that are aimed at transforming the social role-playing self (Goffman [1959] 1973). At the same time, the bus can also be seen as a temporary zone of theatre, where a community comes together for the length of time that one travels (Schechner 2003; Jensen 2010). Depending on the time of day, I could be a player on the stage that is a crowded back of a bus, or ensconced in a single and solitary seat that looks out the long, panoramic windows showing city streets rolling by, or any number of scenarios in between social pressure cooker and solitude.

If the transit commute is seen as simply transportation and as non-place, as is so often the case, then it functions as a necessary dead time where nothing happens but waiting, even enduring. But seen as a practice of travel, the commute can also be "gift time" (Jain and Lyons 2008), a space for contemplation or enjoyment. It is the idea of "gift time" that I am interested in particularly, for as Ole B. Jensen (2009, 154) points out, pleasure is a less discussed element of mobility, but one that can provide a more meaningful approach to commuting as a life practice. In suggesting a move from "urban transport to urban travel," he asks, "can infrastructures be understood and comprehended within the realm of aesthetic pleasure?"

The question of aesthetic pleasure within urban travel forms the basis of this chapter. It revolves around the experience of commuting as "gift time" and also "equipped time" (Jain and Lyons 2008), referring to props such as books and newspapers, but also and especially to the growing presence of mobile technologies that allow a commuter to control how time is spent while in transit. As cell phones, tablets,

and other electronic devices become ubiquitous, they offer a great potential to bring out the pleasures of commuting, for they are uniquely able to interface with the city that then becomes a "hybrid space" (Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011). This chapter looks specifically at the in-between spaces of city transit as a liminal space of everyday ritual, a performance site of urban contact and a hybrid mobile space through the use of locative media. Through an exploration of different artworks that have taken place in the spaces of urban transit, locative mobile media art in particular, I suggest some possibilities towards an aesthetics of mobility, and a practice of detouring the transit commute.

Approach

> There is a technical artistry to train travel, for mundane everyday things, the seats, our belongings, the passing views, can be woven together with bored repetition, or into train-dreaming…
>
> – Alain de Botton (2002)

As the main setting for this chapter, I draw upon Montréal's public transit system—the *Société de transport de Montréal* (or STM). City transit is a central part of Montréal life. According to the STM, 1.3 million trips are taken daily (http://www.stm.info/en/about/financial_and_corporate_information/about-stm). I was a frequent user of the STM for almost 20 years, through which I developed my passengering skills, and although not without its problems, the bus and metro system was generally very reliable. In 2010, the STM won the American Public Transportation Association Award as Outstanding Public Transportation System in North America – the "Stanley Cup" of transportation awards, as declared by Yves Devin, STM Director General ("STM Wins" 2010). Further, the STM is perhaps exemplary for its integration of art into its network. In addition to the works of art built into the metro stations themselves – for instance, Marcelle Ferron's enormous stained glass windows at Champs de Mars Station, or Jean Mercier's cartwheeling people mural at L'Acadie Station (see www.metrodemontreal.com) – a bus ticket or OPUS monthly pass will also earn discounts off many of the city's cultural events such as film festivals and museum days.

The STM partners regularly with festivals such as the all-night arts event Nuit Blanche, when bus and metro services also remain open all night, and a number of artists have made works directly engaging the transit system as set and setting. The STM thus provides many opportunities to study the aesthetics of mobility and mobile art.

Now being based in Southern Ontario, I can also provide a glance into GO Transit, the Government of Ontario's (hence, GO) regional public transportation system that serves what is known as the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). According to the GO Transit website, 250,000 people use its system daily, mostly to downtown Toronto's Union Station (GO Transit 2014). My own experiences travelling on GO Transit are mainly from Hamilton to Union on the bus and back, ranging from 50 minutes with no traffic to an hour and a half or more in rush hour. GO Transit provides an opportunity to look at an example of regional commuter culture. Most commutes on GO Transit are generally longer than a typical Montreal downtown commute (though not necessarily), and may thus enact a stronger liminality.

I frame my theoretical discussions mainly through Victor Turner's anthropological studies of the liminal space (1977, 1982), as well as his concept of communitas, both of which originally described larger-scale community rites but can also be found on the small, everyday level. Communitas offers contact and exchange with our fellow citizens, moments of more unguarded being, and it is often through art and music that it occurs. Liminality and communitas are core concepts in an aesthetics of urban everyday mobility. Also central is the work of Erving Goffman ([1959] 1973) and Georg Simmel ([1907] 1998). both sociologists who focused on the minute interactions of everyday life in urban settings. Indeed, Goffman and Simmel are referenced often in the wide-ranging, interdisciplinary mobilities studies that has sprung up in recent years, which has offered much investigation into "the art of travel," particularly through the social sciences. For instance, in "The Art and Craft of Train Travel" (2008), ethnographer Laura Watts examines how the specific space-time of the train passenger is constructed through socio-material relations and geographic spatiality. Tim Edensor, in "Commuter: Mobility, rhythm, commuting" (2011) critiques the popular cultural representations of commuting as a dystopian, alienating practice and proposes that Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis might be used to explore how "place-making and sensing is

rhythmic" (192). There is even a "Travel Remedy Kit" that gives prompts designed to draw the traveller's attention and imagination to various constituent elements of the journey and the personal stories that result (Watts and Lyons 2010).

Mobile methodologies have also become the subject of mobilities research, focusing on how new methods can be developed, old methods repurposed, and the implications of each critiqued (Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2010; Fincham, McGuinness and Murray 2010). The challenge is to represent experience that is inherently ephemeral and "in-between." I can locate my own practices within many such descriptions of mobile methods. For instance, the "go along" or "walking with" describes ways of participating in "patterns of movement while simultaneously conducting research." This includes the use of observation in a kind of "sociological stalking," as well as "mobile video ethnography" and "time-space diaries" to record both my fellow commuters and reflexively, myself as subject (Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2010, 8-11). At the same time, I look at my environment as an artist, with an eye on aesthetics, light, shadow, color. Beyond mobile video ethnography, my images and audio field recordings, often taken with a cell phone, are the raw materials for my experimental videowork. These are all pertinent methods of being a passenger-researcher.

Aside from the "art of travel," however, I would like to argue that actual art, whether visual, aural, as performance, installation or mobile media, is often the best way to engage a commuter, to detour from the functionalistic and into a space of connection. In spite of the rich and diverse field of study that has developed around mobilities, not much has been written about works of art or practices of art-making that engage with the potency of liminal space and the potential of communitas in urban commuting. Thus, I use these mobile methods to help describe my experiences and relate them to my explorations of urban transit as a site of artistic engagement with the city and with my fellow citizens, through both my own work and the various artworks I have encountered in the spaces of the Montreal transit system. I also build on some recent theories about mobile media interfaces that create a new sense of space and place (Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011; Farman 2012; de Souza e Silva and Frith 2012), in order to sketch out a few possibilities towards an aesthetics and practice of the transit commute.

City transit as a liminal space

When I arrive at the bus-stop, there is already a long line-up. It's dark and raining. The bus doesn't come for over ten minutes, but when it finally does, it is packed full. I squish my way on, managing to validate my fare card and push my way through the crowd, which has accumulated the most density in the first third of the bus. Some people are completely unaware of the space around them, obliviously wearing their bulky backpacks so that it is difficult to get by them. There are advertisements and posters on the bus, advising people to "tenir son sacs à dos" (hold backpacks by the hand); clearly, many people don't realize they are the targets of such advice. There is, of course, nowhere to sit. I get out my iPod, put on my headphones, and turn up the music loud, thinking about the tasks I need to get done today at work.

The defining mode of the transit commute is the retreat into isolation, which has variously been called a "safety bubble" (Bissell 2009), "bubble of privacy" (Adey 2010), or "cocoon" (Farman 2012; Jain and Lyons 2008). Michel de Certeau (1984), in "Railway Navigation and Incarceration," calls it a "bubble of panoptic and classifying power, a module of imprisonment… Here rest and dreams reign supreme" (111). Travel time can also become an individual spatial practice of accumulating memory and meaning. The liminality of city transit can be a valuable tool in the practice and rituals of everyday life.

To begin, what exactly is the liminal space of city transit? How is it constituted, and in what ways does it work for the commuter? Here, I draw upon the work of Victor Turner, a cultural anthropologist who wrote about liminality as that "in-between" state of shamans, artists, and actors, as well as those undergoing a rite of passage. Turner was originally describing the cultural traditions of Zambian indigenous tribes, but later widened his scope to settings in the Western industrialized world. I look as well to Erving Goffman, whose well-known work framed the small interactions of everyday life as worthy of investigation. It is in Goffman's spirit particularly that I relate Turner's work on the liminal space to the quotidian act of commuting.

As described in his book *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982), Turner became interested in the study of symbolic genres through Arnold Van Gennep's *Rites de Passage*. Van Gennep studied rites of passage in small-scale societies, and the term has

come to signify those landmark events such as birth, marriage, and death, but Turner is adamant that its application is much broader, stating that "I have tried to revert to van Gennep's earlier usage in regarding almost all types of rites as having the processual form of 'passage'" (24-25). Now, a commute on city transit can certainly be seen as routine, but can it be called a rite?

Rich Ling (2008), in his work on mobile communications and ritual interactions, discusses the many different uses of the word "ritual," which he notes, can be seen as pejorative (as in merely symbolic, with no other active value) but is for him positive, a "catalyst for cohesion." Ling's usage is that of a social phenomenon, a societal construction for interaction, following sociologist Emile Durkheim, who, like Turner, also references van Gennep. The Durkheimian "ritual" can be similarly applied to everyday interactions, after Goffman. If I can understand the definition of a "rite of passage" as any transformative sequence of events, as Turner, Goffman and Ling do, then I can include the commute as such an everyday rite. Here, I focus particularly on Turner's meaning of ritual as transformative from one social role or status to another.

Goffman, in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* ([1959] 1973), elucidates his theory that each of us must act differently according to different settings, and that we present ourselves in a series of different masks depending on the context. He suggests that all social interactions are staged, and that one's main roles and interactions are thus prepared for "backstage" and played out on a "main stage" area. If we follow this theatre-everyday life paradigm, one can view the performance that one gives in the role of student, professional, office worker, etc., as the time "onstage," whereas the time spent en route to this performance as "backstage" or "the wings." We might see the space of the private home self as "the green room," or perhaps it is another kind of stage, depending on one's role as a family member. The rite of passage, then, prepares you for the performance, and allows you to emerge with your mask on, or to take it off, or to change roles. In this sense, both Goffman and Turner, in using the theatrical paradigm, point to the importance of daily rituals that enable these small transformations of the self.

In "The Phenomenon of Mobility at the Frankfurt International Airport," Kerstin Söderblom (2008) invokes Turner for her analysis of transit passages, specifically air

travel, on the three steps common to all passage rituals: separation, passage/transition, and reconnection/reincorporation. Air travel is a more extreme form of liminality than the Goffman-esque form of the daily commute, as it is not for most of us routine, and its effects are more pronounced. Nevertheless, the structures of liminality are similar and thus offer a valuable comparison. Following Söderblom's transposition, I can thus describe a ride on city transit as follows: The first phase of separation clearly demarcates sacred from profane, using symbolic behavior to detach the individual from his or her previous social status. Söderblom describes the symbolic behavior of separation as the process of passing through security, having all your belongings and each part of your person scanned or touched, in order to grant you entry. On public transit, this symbolic behavior resides more simply in validating your bus pass or ticket, which you must keep with you at all times or risk prosecution, and then passing through the turnstiles of the metro or past the bus driver and onto the bus.

Because the Montréal metro is completely underground, one must descend quite far into a different landscape below where there are different rules and codes; however, even the bus, with its metal-box construction and window frames looking out onto the passing scenery, can be seen as having a unique and particular ambiance that frames liminality. Phase two, passage or the liminal stage, is a free-floating space, the result of a suspension of certain rules, where status, roles, and private identities do not count for much. Söderblom notes that this is only possible because "the space is framed, controlled, and clearly distinguished from other places" (185).

Turner notes that "sharp symbolic inversion of social attributes may characterize separation; blurring and merging of distinctions may characterize liminality... In mid-transition the initiands are pushed as far toward uniformity, structural invisibility, and anonymity as possible" (26). And indeed, to be a commuter is to be part of the anonymous crowds that pass through metros and buses every rush hour, where no one knows who you are. Each person you see will likely be forgotten immediately and never seen again (there are exceptions to this, specifically the phenomenon of the "familiar stranger," someone who shares schedules with you or lives close to you, whom you have come to recognize though you have never met). The liminal phase relieves one of the obligation to play a social role. Augé (1995) notes how people can hide or re-invent

themselves in these spaces of anonymity, though he emphasizes that there are no non-places in the absolute sense of the word.

The in-between space itself blurs social roles because it is defined outside of work, play, or leisure. It is linked more closely to work (being necessary to go to work but not yet working), but it is seldom thought of as play – and yet, a certain amount of play or leisure can be had through mobile electronic devices and reading materials. The state of waiting obliges a sort of repose, though of course, people can choose to use this time for either work and play. Students read textbooks, teachers correct papers, etc. This is how, in a space of anonymity, one can re-constitute social identity by the means of props and tasks that signify the roles one is about to play or has just finished playing. The bubbles of isolation let us remain private within the public sphere, but the borders, if there are any, remain constantly shifting.

At the end of each journey, we must ascend out of the underground metro, or off the bus, and back to our social role-playing lives. To return to van Gennep and Turner's three-part ritual, phase three in the rite of passage is reconnection, where you pick up the threads of your own identity. Status, goals and time-schedules once again are set in place, but these are different than before the passage. There is a change of place and a change of state, as the individual transforms from a private to a public self or vice versa. This change in state allows the act of taking city transit to be seen as a "rite of passage." The time that one spends on the bus or metro can be thought of as apart from ordinary life, yet paradoxically, woven into the fabric that makes up one's daily routine.

Of course, any time and space between the locales of everyday role-playing can be viewed as more or less liminal, including cars, elevators, sidewalks, and other such spaces of passage. What makes city transit unique as a liminal space is the intensity of the urban experience, the sensual and material qualities of the space, and the proximity of fellow commuters, all of whom are also actors in the same space, each in their own bubbles. This non-place of the bus or metro can certainly seem equalizing. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor (though the very rich will seldom be seen on public transit), you still line-up to get on, and seats are available to whoever gets there first. But of course, even in a liminal non-place, one carries physical and identifying markers – one cannot escape the body. This is also how social relations get restored within such

spaces: women may still be harassed, the elderly and the pregnant may be offered seats. The bubble of isolation is easily broken by passenger interaction, though usually one acts in order to not interact. The liminality of city transit functions performatively not only to transform the individual self, but also to generate a space of social (non)interaction and performance.

City transit as a space of performance

The metro doors open and I board the train. Before me is arrayed a tableau of characters, some sitting and some standing. An older man with long matted gray hair, dishevelled and possibly drunk, kept on a running diatribe loudly to himself, though I can only make out a few of his words: tabarnak… tabarnak! Immigration… tabarnak. A circle of space has cleared around him as people avoid his area. It reminds me of another time long ago on a bus when a fellow passenger, again an older man but neat and in a suit, quietly muttered "go back to where you came from, immigrant…" That was the first time I had shouted at a stranger. Here, I remain standing near the doors, away from the possibly drunk man. I can smell him, in fact, drunk. A tall woman in a leather coat next to me is about to sit down in the empty seat near him, then sees him and changes her mind. We catch each other's eye, exchange looks.

The space of city transit can be thought of as a performance space in many ways. Not only is it performative in a liminal sense (of transforming the role-playing self), but also as a space of social interaction. Because we must spend a certain amount of time together physically in the material space of a bus or metro car, anything that happens here can be seen as a social drama co-performed by actor-commuters. To extend Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, Jensen (2010) brings in the idea of the subway as a stage with a play already ongoing, and the other commuters as performers who are already there in mid-scene when you come on stage.

Richard Schechner, in his book *Performance Theory* (2003), draws on both Goffman and Turner to take a wide, interdisciplinary approach to defining theatre, including anthropological rites, political demonstrations, sports, theatrical productions, and performing arts events. As Schechner notes, the requirements for theater are quite

basic. All that is needed are three elements: Gathering, playing out an action or actions, and dispersing. Schechner, in drawing links between the tribal world and contemporary theatrical events, notes that this pattern occurs "naturally" in urban settings, since all that is needed is "the interplay between space, time, performers, action and audience" (58). Erica Fischer-Lichte also believes that performance occurs through this interplay. In *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008), she states that the "bodily co-presence of actors and spectators enables and constitutes performance. For a performance to occur, actors and spectators must assemble to interact in a specific place for a certain period of time… Through their physical presence, perception, and response, the spectators become co-actors that generate the performance by participating in the "play" (32).

All of the traumas of urban life can be found on city transit in a compressed fashion. There are small events of random connections and kindnesses, incidents of sexism, racism, all manners of conflict, eruption (in the manner of Schechner), and resolution. A passenger is thus a spectator in this play, as well as an actor who may have a bit-part to play or even a character in a major role. Witnessing events on a bus or in the cramped confines of a metro car can sometimes propel one into interacting or intervening. However, interactions, whether positive or negative, are relatively rare. The overwhelming state of mind found during the liminal phase and in a non-place is that of anonymity and non-interaction, where one acts to avoid interaction. There is a wide variety of fine-grained performances to make others feel more comfortable or to claim personal space (Bissell 2009).

Performance also entails the ability to "play the metro as a sport – to tell whether the sound you hear is your train coming into the station, and to judge whether you have time to make it by running down the stairs four at a time." (Criqui 1994, 3) One may also have personal techniques to increase the efficiency of navigating the metro (Augé 2002). For instance, I know the specific details in my route such as the exact places where to stand on the metro platform so as to arrive at my exit point, the best routes in and out of the stations, and where to stand in the metro cars for best access to the doors. These "body techniques," as Marc Augé calls them, "are closely connected to this presence of others … your ways of standing, sitting, and moving are directed by the density of the

crowd" (Criqui, 3). During rush hour, one is required to perform agile feats such as interweaving between bodies while pushing through a crowded bus, or rushing from one metro platform to the next to transfer trains.

Fischer-Lichte also points to how smells, sounds, voices, and tonality can affect specific atmospheres that contribute to the performance space. Especially useful is Georg Simmel's "Sociology of the Senses" ([1907] 1998), particularly on the strong affect of odour. Smell is an extremely personal sense, with the result that our reactions to odours can be much stronger than we anticipate. Simmel writes that "[s]melling a person's body odour is the most intimate perception of them; they penetrate, so to speak, in a gaseous form into our most sensory inner being… Indeed, in general, shocks to the sense of smell will be directly quantitatively proportional to the mass of people in the midst of which they strike us" (119). When pressed into a closed space, odor is one of the strongest forms of atmosphere, and one of the reasons people dislike public transit. Not only is there body odor, especially on hot days when the stink of sweat or alcohol can be overpowering, but there is also the dankness of damp coats on rainy days, especially when the moisture in the surrounding air brings out the unmistakable must of wet wool. Sometimes people wear too much perfume or cologne, which can lead to a sensation of choking, even asthma. If someone is eating food, especially fast food, the odors can make one hungry, or be repulsed, especially if it is a food you are not used to smelling or do not like. In a crowd on the street, one can move away from the offending smell, but in a crowd on the bus or metro car during rush hour, one is trapped, "incarcerated" as de Certeau suggests in "Railway Navigation and Incarceration" (1984). This is why city transit, out of all urban sites of contact, brings us closest to the "other," each other.

Simmel's treatment of the different senses illustrate how they might affect our non-interactions on city transit, how we act to avoid interacting. He points out that looking is perhaps the most direct, pervasive interaction there is. Because usually, strangers do not look at each other directly, catching someone's eye on the bus can amount to a brief connection, the sharing of a particular moment. As Simmel notes, "One cannot take through the eye without at the same time giving… Since this obviously occurs only during the direct look from one eye to another, the most complete

reciprocity in the entire sphere of human relationships is achieved here" (112). To not look at someone is to remove oneself, in a sense, from being seen; it is to retreat into the isolating bubble. Sound, on the other hand, works in contrast to sight. Simmel posits that "the ear is the egoistic organ pure and simple, which only takes, but does not give… It pays for this egoism in that it cannot turn away or close itself, like the eye; rather, since it only takes, it is condemned to take everything that comes into its vicinity – a fact that will reveal sociological consequences" (115). On city transit, this translates to aural annoyances such as cell phones, loud music, or loud conversations that can filter easily through one's protective bubble.

Fischer-Lichte notes that the interplay between material setting, duration, time intervals and atmospheres also affects the space of performance. The bus/metro as an architectural theatre space (the shape and layout of the vehicle itself, the STM or GO "branding" and the various types of media and advertising that "decorate" the walls) directly impacts the liminal space. For instance, the GO Train, in contrast to the GO Bus, can be a more social space because of the layout of the seats, which are in quads that face each other, forcing a slight awkwardness as strangers try to avoid touching their knees and their legs together. Each passenger is in clear sight of the other passengers, making the space quite social. Thus, there are many rules in this space to keep social order, though not always followed (e.g., no feet on the seats, quiet zones enforced during certain times). The material design of GO buses, on the other hand, is like the typical long distance coach, with all seats paired two to a side and all facing forward. The seats are tall and recline back. The layout is more conducive to solitude than that of the Go Train, though of course times and durations also play their part.

The longer the duration or length of time spent on transit, the deeper the liminality. For instance, if a trip by airplane, as described by Söderblom, can be seen as having a more extreme liminality than by Montreal city transit, then too can a trip by regional commuter transit such as the GO Bus. From Hamilton to Union Station, the trip is long (50 minutes or more) and there are no transfers, so I'm settled into my seat for a good period of time, and am not required to keep track of where I am. This kind of commute summons an experience of solitary spectatorship, the perfect circumstance for sleeping, reading, listening to music or other audio media, relaxing, and watching the

suburban landscape go by. In contrast, to get from my home in Parc-Extension to downtown Montreal by metro, I had to change lines twice, thus leaving little time to settle in. Although travel time was not much less than on the GO bus (approximately 45 minutes including transfers), much of it was spent waiting to arrive, to change platforms, to wait for the next train, etc. The liminal phase, in this case, had a more scattered shape than on regional transit.

As well, transit spatiality changes according to different rhythms and geographies, for instance, the neighborhoods that the bus or train travels through. The blue line of the Montreal Metro seems to have more of a diversity of passengers than the green line, for instance, as it passes through Parc-Extension, one of Montreal's most diverse neighbourhoods. In addition, there is the element of rhythm in the repetitions of the bus or metro car stopping and starting, and the entering and exiting of passengers at each stop. Tim Edensor (2011) picks up on rhythm, particularly through Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis, to see how it can be used as "a starting point for investigating the complex temporal rhythms of the multiple mobilities coursing through space" (189). He foregrounds itineraries produced by time, collective rhythms of the city as enacted through early morning and later afternoon rush hours, the mid-afternoon lull. City transit can be meditative and peaceful, especially in the late afternoon. Late nights on the weekends can produce rowdy characters and thus a party atmosphere that can be disturbing to others. During rush hours, the transit experience is more likely to be seen as irritating than as a gift. Rush hour will directly affect the kind of experience one is likely to have: Whether you will feel stressed and pressured, whether you are likely to sit, stand, or be packed in sardine-like. Each of these elements contributes to the atmosphere of the space and influences performance.

Consistency and familiarity of commuting can permit a diverse range of pleasurable effects. As Edensor points out, the "underappreciated familiarity, the regular passing of familiar landmarks, people, events and objects at a predictable speed allows certain nuanced and enhanced appreciations of place through mobility to be grasped" (2011, 197). As the bus moves through the city, its streets can be seen through the windows, which serve to keep one's orientation as well as give a sense of how the streets change. Stores and businesses act not only as landmarks, but as advertisements for

themselves via their signage. One can track changes and developments as the days and weeks go by, such as a long empty storefront that suddenly has brown paper decorating its windows (thus raising anticipation), or a restaurant that goes out of business. The metro is a more self-contained system. Because there are no landmarks, save the occasional signage pointing the direction, one must rely on being able to interpret the signs and diagrams. While on the metro itself, one has the feeling of being in a small metal box, hurtling through space. Although there are windows on the metro cars, there is very little to see between stations, and so the distance traveled becomes more abstracted, with the station stops themselves being the main points of reference. The distance that one travels becomes a sequence of both familiar and changing sights, an act of reading and listening to well-known tempos and durations.

Although transit systems are basically the same in their structures and functions, each has its specifics and can differ vastly, as Taras Grescoe has written about in his book *Straphanger* (2012). The degree to which the commute can be theatrical spectatorship, cinematic solitude, boring, irritating or enjoyable, depends upon quite a number of different elements, as just described, but perhaps the most important factor in a pleasurable commute is attendance. Schechner notes that "the differences among ritual, theater, and ordinary life depend on the degree spectators and performers attend to efficacy, pleasure, or routine" (152). As commuters and urban travellers, if we are focused only on efficacy, then we are simply waiting for arrival, and missing out on the pleasure.

City transit as space for communitas

Being in the metro on the way to a "manif" with a crowd of protesters, many holding signs and banners, the spirit high and hopeful, the feeling of being "we" while not losing the self. Being on the metro going home when it seemed that everyone else was going to the U2 concert, or to a hockey game, feeling outside their "we"-ness (as fans of U2 or the Canadiens). Feeling united in exasperation when the metro stops in a tunnel and the lights dim, leaving everyone trapped together in the semi-darkness. Joining a small crowd in applause for the young violinist playing beautifully on the metro platform.

In spite of the often conflictual or annoying occurrences with others on city transit, there exists also the possibility of communitas with the "temporary congregations" or "mobile withs" of fellow passengers that form quickly and dissolve just as fast (Jenson 2010, 341). Special events such as a hugely popular concert or a hockey game can engender a shallow kind of we-ness that is held together by proximity and fandom. A massive demonstration, such as those during the 2012 Montreal student protests, can engender a deeper spirit of solidarity amongst people who are moving together towards a goal. But even everyday random encounters with strangers can turn one's focus from efficacy and boredom to theatre and pleasure, especially with the help of aesthetic performances and installations such as music and art. In this section, I explore how Turner's concept of communitas can create a deeper sense of place, community, and pleasure.

Turner defines communitas as "the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses, enacting a series of social roles…" (1982, 45). It occurs during the liminal phase when people are no longer role-playing, no longer aware of social status. It manifests as a kind of interrelatedness that can reach across the structural systems that usually dictate social behaviors. People experiencing communitas feel a sort of unity, though not in the sense of "merging," for individual distinctiveness is preserved. Communitas may be rare, but as Turner notes, it is "sometimes aided by the projections of art that this way of experiencing one's fellows can be portrayed, grasped, and sometimes realized." When communitas occurs spontaneously, it is "a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities… it has something 'magical' about it" (46-7)

How does the performance space of city transit bring about communitas through art? Sometimes it is through aesthetic performances: for instance, the STM often partners with various cultural institutions such as Les Grands Ballets Canadiens or Opéra de Montréal to bring spectacles and concerts to the metro stations. These kinds of performances can draw people together into a space where there is an atmosphere of communitas. Buskers can sometimes do this as well.

After entering the Metro at Guy/Concordia station, I descend underground on the escalator. At the bottom, there is a space for buskers, as there are in most stations, which is designated by a sign with a graphic symbol of a lyre. As a major urban university is located here, Guy/Concordia is one of the busiest stations, and there is almost always a busker, usually a sole figure playing an instrument. Sometimes it is the Asian man playing accordion, or one of several guitar players, or the elderly man with a saxophone. Tonight, however, there is a beat box and a group of b-boys showing off their moves. A small crowd has gathered around them to watch. I join in for a moment or two, enjoying the way members of the audience are smiling and moving to the beats, before heading down to the platform to catch the train.

As Amanda Boetzkes (2010) demonstrates in her essay about "the ephemeral stage" at Lionel-Groulx Metro, buskers must work to break the isolation between strangers, and to solidify the bonds between them. An engaging performance allows people to break out of their bubbles of isolation, to unify in a collective form. Through subtle gestures and body language, "individuals in the crowd collaborate and come to a precarious agreement to collectively gravitate around the performance while respectively maintaining their personal definition" (153). This description of the audience fits Turner's definition of communitas, and although it does not happen often, when it does, it becomes an event, something memorable that turns a non-place into place for the individual who experienced it.

Buskers and other kinds of performers attempt to break the bubble of isolation in order to entertain. Mobile media has changed the kinds of performances that are possible in the public sphere, to redefine who can be a performer. As with the advent of such practices as social networking and crowdsourcing, public performance now includes Flash Mobs and Smart Mobs, where groups of people assemble quickly and suddenly to perform a specified action for a usually brief period of time, and then just as quickly disassemble. They are usually coordinated through mobile media devices, most often cell phones and SMS texts (Lemos 2010). Flash Mobs can occur anywhere, at any time, but one of the earliest and most well known instances is the No Pants Subway Ride, a now annual worldwide event that anyone can participate in. Montreal joined in with

its first “Flashmob d'individus sans pantalon” on the Metro in January 2013 (see www.nightlife.ca/divertissement/flashmob-dindividus-sans-pantalon-dans-le-metro-de-montreal-dimanche). These types of performances, with their elements of surprise and silliness, can also break through the bubble of isolation.

Beyond performance, public art installations can also foster a type of communitas. For example, a rare instance of public art as a kind of theatrical setting was found in a metro car installation called *Point de fuite* (2007) by visual artist Rose-Marie E. Goulet and sound artist Chantal Dumas. *Point de fuite* (or “vanishing point”) was the first project of its kind to be realized in a metro in North America (“Point de fuite,” 2007). As an installation, it intervened in the normal spatiality and materiality of the metro system with a variety of sounds and images, such as snippets of narratives, chirping birds, applause, roosters, laughter, chimes, and pixelated photos of the city on the windows, walls, and ceiling of a metro car. The lighting was dimmed and the interiors were painted a dark midnight blue. The result was, to some, surprising, confusing, even annoying; to others, it was oneiric, charming, pleasurable. One came upon the car by accident, and part of the fun was to watch the reactions of others, as the work often provoked commentary and conversation. The shared experience of the art installation often brought the individual passengers together into something more of a community.

Communitas remains, however, a relatively rare occurrence. Most of the time, people prefer not to interact directly with others. The defining experience of commuting on city transit is one of isolation and non-interaction, but this has its pleasures as well. Practiced commuters know how to attend to the pleasures of liminal space, not only through their adeptness in their routines, but also by planning their time and equipping themselves with the proper tools in order to take advantage of travel time as a gift.

City transit and equipped travel time

Tellingly, various commentators in different studies (Jain and Lyons 2008; Watts and Lyons 2010; Bull 2007) said that even if they could teleport to their destination, they would not want to. They preferred to have the travel time. The liminal space offers an

opportunity to plan, to think, to daydream, to be between roles and responsibilities. "Transition time" (as in moving between social roles) was found to be one of two categories of travel time as "gift" to the individual commuter, as articulated by Jain and Lyons (2008). "Time out" was the other category, which described how some people might even take a longer route over a shorter one in order to have longer gift time. To manage and control their experiences of travel as gift time, commuters equip themselves to deal with their surroundings and themselves in the middle of the liminal space, in order to maintain their ritual of transition or time out. This is "equipped time," which more and more includes mobile and locative technologies.

Urban commuters and travellers have always used "equipped time," often to disengage from the urban environment. Indeed, Simmel's oft-quoted work "The Metropolis and Mental Life," originally written in 1903 but still pertinent today, describes the many ways of disengagement from the overwhelming stimuli of the city. Simmel's discussion of the metropolitan "blasé" attitude forms the basis of many contemporary investigations into urban space and interaction (see, for instance, Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011; de Souza e Silva and Frith 2012, Donald 1999). As Jensen (2010) notes, the "classic" tools (such as newspapers and books) for establishing and maintaining isolation are now supplemented with mobile technologies such as MP3 players, smartphones, and tablets. Earplugs are one instance of how such props have become incorporated into social interactions, allows "nonreciprocal looking," where you can look at other people semi-directly, but your visible earplugs announce that you are really otherwise occupied (Bull 2000, 2007). David Bissell (2009) calls this use of personal stereos "a sonic shield" (58). These kinds of actions are aimed at isolating the self from contact, and maintaining the private space of liminality.

With "equipped time," we have some control over the shape of our liminal space. As Laura Watts (2008) suggests, we each shape our travel times differently, according to the different artifacts, practices, and methods that we use. Watts shapes "ethnography time" with her work, observations, pen and paper; I shape "creative time" when I am filming images or recording sound, in the flow with no awareness of time passing. If I am not equipped or if I feel like doing nothing, travel time may appear slow. If I am listening to music, the time is shaped by the kind of music, whether symphonic, mellow, melodic,

or discordant. Indeed, music is a common tool for commuters because it helps to set the mood. Michael Bull (2000, 2007) has written extensively about how often people use music to give themselves control over their journey. He finds that many people will use the same music on a regular basis, so that each part of the journey has its own tune. He also notes that music can let one create imaginary cinematic narratives. The feeling of being in a movie is re-enforced when the bus or train windows frame a panoramic view. The passing landscape invokes the classic cinematic tracking shot and the phantom ride (with the camera mounted at the front of a train) from the very earliest films, described by Tom Gunning (2006) as promoting "a truly modern perception of landscape, one mediated by technology and speed" (37).

Also common are electronic devices that allow passengers to have constant connection with virtual environments, the Internet, games, etc. It is possible to travel in bubbles that are wholly independent of the material environment. Augé sees these virtual spaces as another kind of non-place, "the spaces of the cable, the wire, of media communications" (Criqui 1994, 4). The physical and social spaces of isolation that are enacted on city transit are conducive to the virtual state of non-place. And as Jensen (2010) points out, not only do these devices work as shields, but they themselves are "networked and linked into many other layers of communication and interaction" (347).

It may seem that the isolating bubble is stronger than ever, even if it can never really be opaque. But communitas is possible in the solitude of liminality, too, or something like it, and it is locative mobile media, specifically, that enables this possibility. In the next section, I investigate some art works that engage with liminality, communitas, travel time and the experience of emplacement through mobile and locative media, each being an exploration of how place can be enacted on Montreal city transit.

City transit, locative art and hybrid space

Mobile technologies may help to strengthen the bubble of isolation, but as de Souza e Silva and Frith (2012) point out, cell phones and props such as headphones or earbuds do not automatically disconnect people from their surroundings. If the goal is to

completely insulate the individual from the outside world, it will never be fully reached for sounds of the city inevitably filter in. Instead of presuming that mobile media is used simply to shut out and to isolate, another approach is to ask how this technology might be used to draw one into an awareness of place and everyday sound (Kaye 2013).

Samuel Thulin (2013) examines this question in two ways. He investigates new smart phone applications that connect audio content with location, drawing connections to mobile sound art that focuses attention on the moment of interaction between sound and place. He also offers his own creative intervention into the travel time bubble with his project *There to Hear: Placing Mobile Music*. This forty-two minute musical composition uses only field recordings from a specific city transit route in Montréal and is meant to be listened to in the same places where the sound was found (Thulin 2010). Through what he calls "slippages" (confusion as to whether a particular sound came from the music or the environment), Thulin challenges the separation between place and listener, while asserting that the isolating bubble is actually quite porous (Kaye 2013).

Another mobile media piece called *Cartier: Stéréobus* by Montréal sound collective Audiotopie also directs you on a sound tour, this time a narrative taking place on a specified bus route in Laval, a suburb of Montréal. Through the headphones, you hear two voices that guide you on a journey, which lasts an hour and a half. A male voice asks you questions (I have translated these from the original French): "Listen to what is going on here. What emerges? Here, now? How is perception organized? Identify an order, recognize a rhythm… What is happening here? What is behind you?" At the same time, electronic music and urban background sounds provide layers and echoes that draw attention to your surroundings. Another voice, a woman, intervenes and provokes a drama that begins to unfold, seemingly about a man, once an aviator, who has been trapped in his psycho-sensorial experiences in the year 2574 (http://www.audiotopie.com/stereobus).

Both these projects are site-specific, and play with the "time out" of travel time to create new awareness of place, but in quite different ways. Thulin's piece is a musical composition that engages place through found sound, and although the movements of the music correspond roughly with the movements along the route, Thulin does not aim

for a "perfect fit." Instead, he acknowledges that along the way, chance occurrences such as a bus arriving earlier or later than scheduled result in a variety of ways in which his music and the environment can combine, resulting in a "meta-composition" that emerges differently each time the piece is heard contextually (Thulin 2010).

On the other hand, Audiotopie's work offers a succession of audio illusions to tell a story, similar to the work of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. Cardiff and Miller were perhaps the first to become known for their site-specific audio walks, but as Gordon and de Souza e Silva (2011) note, their initial projects did not use any location-aware technology. In both Cardiff/Miller's and Audiotopie's projects, instructions reside within the soundtrack that direct the listener to, for instance, "move through the turnstiles of the metro." Because both projects rely on the listener's ability to follow these instructions, automated GPS positioning would certainly make the routes easier to navigate, or to provide correction if a participant gets lost.

How many times have I heard someone on a cell phone begin by saying "I'm on the bus"? Location becomes a typical entry point to constant networked communication and everyday interaction. Locative mobile media art opens up possibilities for different approaches to the sound walk, one that does not need to rely on a prescribed route or linear narrative, and thus offers more flexibility. With "mobile annotations" (Lemos 2010; Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011) or "urban mark-ups" (Farman 2012), the practice of attaching information to location presents potential for new hybrid landscapes and ways of experiencing the city. For example, Mutek, a "digital creativity and electronic music festival" in Montreal 2012, paired with the STM to offer a smartphone application called *Audiosphere Montreal,* which used location to turn certain transit routes "into a sonic exploration along the 55, 80, 18, 24 and 165 bus lines. Commuters will discover a rich soundtrack of original compositions produced by local musicians and inspired by the city" (www.mutek.org/en/news/437-audiosphere-a-sonic-exploration-beyond-the-festival).

These mobile media artworks demonstrate the individual's ability to inhabit two spaces at once, the digital and the material, to create a new kind of hybrid space (Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011). This hybridity can allow the traveller to practice "emplacement." Jason Farman (2012) describes emplacement as the "counterpoint to

displacement" and is linked to embodied engagement. Farman argues that through digital and mobile media poetics, the cell phone and other such mobile interfaces can augment methods of exploring public space, rather than removing oneself from it. They can connect histories, stories, and ephemeral media to individuals and communities, to situate and to emplace.

Project 55 is an example of such a locative media work, produced by the *Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling* (COHDS) at Concordia University. Subtitled "A Historical Audio Tour of Ethnic Communities along St-Laurent Boulevard Aboard Bus 55," it is meant to be listened to in situ. The tour comes as a downloadable mp3 file, to be started as one boards Bus 55 at the beginning of its route. As the bus progresses up Montréal's St-Laurent Boulevard, it passes through Chinatown, Little Portugal, the old Yiddish-speaking Mile End of author Mordecai Richler's childhood, and Little Italy, and we hear on our mobile device a series of accompanying interviews with citizens from those communities, store-owners and a bus driver who has been driving the 55 route since the 1990s. These oral histories bring to life the neighborhoods that we are passing through, giving a glimpse into different times and cultures. The *Project 55* tour is an example of how something like communitas can be produced though locative media, for storytelling is an excellent way to produce empathy and a way of "experiencing one's fellows" (Turner 1982, 46).

Through such projects and artworks as models for mobile locative methods of engagement with the city, we can find pleasure in urban travel and the commute. Hybrid landscapes may be an extremely useful concept in an aesthetics of mobility, helping define the equipped time that shapes the liminal space, and providing knowledge and narrative to the places through which one is travelling. With locative media, the possibility exists for historical and material analysis in situ, as well as for games and prompts that help connect one to the environment and possibly even with other passengers for an experience of communitas. What deeper pleasure is there than feeling "emplaced" and a part of the world that is our home?

Rhythms of the familiar

I walk through the alley to the bus stop. The bus comes in less than five minutes. It's one of the new accordion (or articulated) buses that are twice the length of a regular bus. There is always plenty of room in the mid-afternoon. I find a forward-facing window seat, a single. I plug in my earbuds to listen to some ambient beats and watch the landscape go by: there, the new bakery that closed after it had barely opened; yet another failed restaurant near Van Horne and du Parc; construction moving up and down the road filled with bright orange signs. Then the park, the angel statue, the wide curve of road that gives room for acceleration into the downtown core, and I know that I'm nearly there. There are pleasures in the rhythms of the familiar.

De Certeau describes the train window as that which creates the spectator's distance, "makes our memories speak or draws out of the shadows the dreams of our secrets" (112). He points to how people can transform existing places into triggers for their own memories and stories. Mainly, he has applied this spatial practice to walking or drifting through the city, and how people make their own paths. On the train, as on the bus, one cannot make one's own path physically, but nonetheless, one's thoughts drift into places that cannot be predicted, for this incarcerated state, this "cutting-off is necessary for the birth, outside of these things but not without them, of unknown landscapes and the strange fables of our private stories" (112). Travel time offers the gift of the journey, whether to daydream, think, prepare, read or listen, play, or just be in-between. The idea of pleasure in mobility can be built upon the structures of travel time as transition and time out. The passenger as spectator, as actor, and as ritual-maker: these roles provide suggestions for further research into what the aesthetics of mobility might entail.

Passengering can involve many different practices, from work, contemplation and observation, play and creative time shaped by media of all sorts. For instance, the view of the city as aesthetic material suggests an archival art practice. My own website project *Detours: Poetics of the City*, features the "City Transit" map that developed out of cell phone videos from my documentary archive of common behaviours and atmospheres found in transit: people sleeping, talking on cell phones, sunlight moving

through the windows, the rhythm of crowds, etc. Among the short videopoems are fragments of fictional stories that I have imagined for the familiar strangers that I see in transit or around the neighbourhood. Artist Margaret Flood uses her commute on the GO bus as an aesthetic practice of archiving highway diamonds. She attempts to always sit in the front seat, which affords a beautifully panoramic phantom ride view, and photographs the painted yellow diamonds that designate the carpool lane. Cindy J. Smith, on her popular blog *This Crazy Train* (www.thiscrazytrain.com), chronicles the weird events and inconsiderate actions by other passengers that drive her mad. Since 2010, Smith has documented with cell phone videos and photos the wide assortment of what she calls "donkeys" on GO transit: door donkeys who block the exit doors; stair hogs who block the stairs; bag riders and foot riders whose bags and feet take up seats and space; and "sleepin' hardcore" as those commuters who have not just dozed off but are sprawled out and near-comatose with exhaustion. Each of these practices function as ways to attend to different elements of transit, as art, observation, and social commentary.

This Crazy Train is also a reminder that the liminal space of city transit is also a compressed space of social performance, with all sorts of dramas and non-dramas squeezed into a small metal box. City transit remains a public space, and herein lies its social import. Transit pathways can sometimes cut across borders (of different neighbourhoods, cities, class-lines), bringing people together physically into the liminal space and face to face with all sorts of annoyances, alterity and difference, as public space should. Cities present one the most productive characteristics of physical space, which as Doreen Massey suggests, is the potential for chance juxtapositions of unrelated trajectories such as "bumping into alterity" or "having (somehow, and well or badly) to get on with neighbours who have got 'here'… by different routes from you" (2005, 94). Being used to difference is an important element of tolerance, for as James Donald points out, one of the main questions of urbanism "is not just how to live in the city, but how to live together" (1999, 139).

Public space can also provide for the pleasure of communitas through engagement with fellow travellers, and this, I believe should be the goal of public transit art. The in-between space of city transit is ripe for creative interventions of all kinds, and

this should be acknowledged and incorporated into transit systems. Because you are in a sense incarcerated, trapped in one physical space, a plethora of different media will vie for your attention. Usually, there is only ubiquitous advertising, hoping to capture your drifting thoughts for a second or two, long enough to plant the seeds of curiosity and desire. A quick survey of the 80 bus on November 3rd, 2013, included rather dull advertisements for birth control pills, 3 different cellular telephone companies, and candy. It seems that bus advertising suffers from a general lack of imagination, becoming one distraction among so many others. Transit systems could and should offer a wider range of material beyond advertising and public announcements to include other arts.

Montreal metro cars (and increasingly, metro platforms) feature electronic signs that at times attempt to move beyond the ubiquitous advertising found on posters and into a more general information and entertainment sphere. These *afficheurs électroniques* are able to communicate news concerning metro disruptions, security issues, buses available at any particular station, the date and time, weather, sports, entertainment and daily news. Moreover, there is the attempt to engage the captive audience with tidbits of trivia and helpful advice, such as *la pensée du jour, ces chiffres qui parlent, le juste mot, bon appétit, truc beauté…* These are rotating features, which are at times interspersed with "public" (that is, sponsored by some form of government) initiatives, such as *La science prend le metro* and the unfortunately infrequent *La poésie prend le métro et le bus*. These are encouraging but not nearly enough (and as of this writing, possibly discontinued).

Other transit systems offer some suggestive examples of transit art. Los Angeles, for instance, has its *Out the Window* project, featuring short video and animation clips that play on a small screen mounted inside the bus (http://out-the-window.org/). Toronto has the annual *Toronto Urban Film Festival*, which plays a selection of "short, sweet and silent" films on subway platform screens (http://www.torontourbanfilmfestival.com/). Zoetropes (a sequence of images that produce the illusion of motion) have appeared in subway tunnels in cities such as New York, Atlanta, Washington D.C., Budapest, Hong Kong, and Kiev (www.urbanphoto.net/blog/2010/11/20/tunnel-vision-subway-zoetrope/). But since one of the most defining aspects of city transit occurs as bubbles of isolation that are

often strengthened with electronic devices, mobile and locative media can offer the pleasures of engagement with art and storytelling situated within a mobile, yet site-specific space. This is another form of public transit art that needs to be developed, for a hybrid landscape holds much potential for deepening knowledge with narratives and imagination about one's everyday routes. Through emplacement, we can practice the pleasures of making place.

As Jensen (2009) points out, the city is materialized through mobility; we make contact with urban space by moving through it. This movement is always embodied, subjective, and mediated in a variety of ways. The repeated journeys of the commute accumulate into the personal archives that build place, including one's "image" and "sense" of the city, and private narratives attached to place names and streets. Augé's book *In the Metro* (2002) looks at Paris from the viewpoint of a commuter who has spent years riding its trains. It is in part a meditation on self and memory, and in part an analysis of the globalization that has produced non-places and massive urban development. Augé reveals the ways in which daily life produces maps and itineraries, accumulating personal meanings that layer themselves onto public names and monuments. There are many ways to make place out of non-place. Developing such a practice is key to detouring the transit commute. Indeed, through the daily transformations that are produced in our mundane role-playing, in the liminal spaces of city transit, we can find a rich space of performance, interaction, and story-telling. In this way, we can see the vehicles of urban transit as "metaphors" (after de Certeau), which allow us to write our own stories and to place ourselves into our own lives.

Interchapter Three

Superhighway Suspense Movie

(the cinematic detour)

Figure 20: Still from *Superhighway Suspense Movie*

When we were searching for a house in Hamilton, the first thing I did when looking at a real estate listing was to look up its location on Google Maps. Where is the house, on what street, in what neighbourhood? This information meant little to me, as I didn't know the city well at all. It did tell me what services were near by: restaurants, schools, parks, stores. It gave the outlines of the city, waiting to be filled in. The second thing I did when looking at a house for sale was to look at it in Google Street View. I would look at the lot, then the neighbouring houses, the street, and then finally "walk" around the neighbourhood a bit. One doesn't really "walk" in GSV, though. One drives. GSV is (for the most part) a simulation of driving through the city, down the highway, and through the map. It is its own genre of cinema, a ghost world of warped spaces and blurred faces, frozen in time. For the most part, its images are taken from a vantage point just slightly higher than an automobile. It portrays a worldview that centers and normalizes its

perspective from a car, and from a road. All the sights of the city are seen in GSV as cartographic cinema in the most literal sense.

Cinema is a "practice of space" as Guiliana Bruno (2002) argues, produced by the moving camera. "A frame for cultural mappings, film is *modern cartography*… at once a housing for and a tour of our narrative and our geography" (71). Cities are conjured up in cinema as an archive of images that render certain states of mind or styles of imagining. James Donald (1999) suggests that the mass media helped to shape urban experience, providing a "mediating pedagogy between the reality of the metropolis and its imaginary place in mental life" (63). Google Street View is a very particular kind of cinema with its unmistakable aesthetic, one that is locative at the same time. Who hasn't looked up his or her own home for the thrill of seeing it represented in the cartographic apparatus?

The Google Street View panorama "bubble" is directly connected to the panorama paintings and photos of the 19th century, as well as to early travel films. Google Maps launched its Street View feature in May 2007. "The underlying idea is very simple: Provide an interface that can display street-level images in a natural way that enables convenient navigation between images without losing the map context" (Vincent 2007, 118). GSV might be the most ambitious mapping venture in history, recalling an oft-quoted story by Jorge Luis Borges about a map at the scale of 1:1, which was of course so large that the people in the story ended up using the territory for the map. With digital technologies, maps can be much greater than the 1:1 scale.

My idea for creative research of the auto-commute was to manifest some of the chronotopes that I discuss within the chapter that follows. I was interested in producing a montage of chronotopes about the car, associations of suburbs and stripmalls, disaster films and the space of the highway, woven together with a narrative about the routine drive. I was going to use some of the same methodologies as in the first two works, such as the archiving of images as I travelled in a driving dérive. I had considered perhaps shoot some Super 8 film or cell phone video footage. But as I drove around in Google Street View, I realized that this simulated and ghostly world was a far better fit for the fragments of narrative (spoken by text-to-speech robots) that evoke dystopian futures. The idea of images as a tool of time-travel presented itself, partly in reference to Chris

Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), where a man is selected to go back to the past precisely because of the strength of an image in his mind. In *Superhighway Suspense Movie,* movies, internet images, and the paths of GSV are seen as an archive of the past through which one can travel.

I began the process of driving in Google Street View down the highway between Toronto and Hamilton, a route that has become very familiar. A trip that normally takes under an hour by car (without traffic, of course) took several days by GSV. I had originally planned on using a Javascript that would automatically make a "fly-through" video, and had also experimented with Google Earth's ability to record itineraries and motions and export them as movies. However, because I wanted more precise control of the images, I ended up doing it manually, clicking through the map, and taking a screenshot of my browser window every few "steps." *Superhighway Suspense Movie* is thus an animation composed of nearly 2,000 screenshots of Google Street View.

In "Regular Routes: Deep Mapping a Performative Counterpractice for the Daily Commute" (Bissell and Overend 2015), two researchers change their usual methods of mobility to explore their normal commuting routines. Among various techniques that they propose, David Overend decides to cycle the entire length of his commute, which he normally drives. Laura Bissell, who usually travels by car, ferry, and train, decides to incorporate a swim. Their action results in a strong time-image layer, a story that subsequently changes how they see their respective commutes, even though it is unlikely that they will repeat this exercise. Likewise, my "drive" down the highway in GSV was more at the pace of a walk. This change in speed allowed me to pay closer attention to the space of the highway, even though it was simulated. I stopped every few "steps" to take a screenshot and look closely at the details of the buildings at the side of the highway, the overhead signs, and the shapes of clouds. After a while, I would get into a rhythm, like I could just keep on "walking" for days (which I did). I grew enamoured with some of the views, the strange jagged way the straight power lines stretching over the highway were fragmented, the warps and blips and digital artifacts sometimes producing beautiful abstractions from the landscape. The method of mobility has an inverse relationship to the density of the map, and the slower your movement is, the denser your map. The method affects the speed and thus the space of your liminality.

Changing the normal method of mobility is a valuable tool in the detour, a "performative counterpractice." Nowadays, when I drive down the highway to or from Toronto "in real life," things stand out in my memory from GSV. Buildings and views that I had never noticed before suddenly become landmarks. My trip down the highway has become a cinematic time-space layer that has changed the way I see that particular part of the auto-commute, an unexpected part of that one detour that was the making of *Superhighway Suspense Movie*.

Chapter Three: The Auto-Commute

Moving cities

> Early one morning I drove through Marseille to the station, and as on the way I was struck by familiar places, or by new, unfamiliar places or by others I could not recall in any detail, the city became a book in my hands in which I was casting a couple of quick glances before it went into the box in the attic, disappearing from my sight for who knows how long.
>
> – from "One Way Street," Walter Benjamin (2009, 99)

The first thing that my partner Joe and I did after we decided to take the leap and move to Hamilton, Ontario, the city where Joe is from, is that we bought a car. And thus, as historically human mobility moved from walking to rail and other forms of public transit to the automobile, so does the trajectory of this project. As I glimpsed the last of the row houses on my right and the L'Acadie Boulevard fence on my left as I drove up towards the 40 highway, with all our possessions packed Tetris-style into the back of a rented moving van, I felt the last twenty years of my Montreal life like a book closing its covers. I managed to navigate through the confusing system of on-ramps to the 40, and then gone were all these familiar, unfamiliar and unnoted places of the city that would disappear from my sight and my routine for who knows how long. If it were a book, à la Benjamin, this city would not go in the attic but find a place on my shelf for easy reference, for Montreal is still at the heart of my urban imagination.

Anne Friedberg, in *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (1993), relates her move from the quintessential modern city of New York to the quintessential postmodern city of Los Angeles, and her subsequent change in mode of transport to the car. My own move parallels Friedberg's in many ways. Now we drive to and park at cineplexes located in giant stripmalls, we drive to and park at big box grocery stores, and likewise for most places we go. Now that we own a car, we do almost everything in it. Now it seems, we are part of the problem. But unlike L.A., Hamilton is not postmodern. It was not built around the automobile, but rather the rail and shipping networks that

sprang up around the Great Lakes in the late 1800s. Hamilton has old bones and was in fact incorporated as a city in 1846, just fourteen years after Montreal in 1832. But as with many cities, suburbanization had sucked the life out of the core city, and in the process, Hamilton became a place where for most people, especially those in the suburbs and in more rural areas, driving is the most convenient and even necessary form of travel.

Before our decision to move, Joe and I had been commuting back and forth between Hamilton and Montreal, for we had houses in both cities in an attempt to attend to various family matters. For about a year, I moved between these two places on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, sometimes by train, often by rental car. This is, admittedly, not your average or everyday commute. It combined elements of the long distance road trip with the rush hour drive, for it was somewhat difficult to avoid the congestion around Toronto. After the move had been decided and the car bought, we mainly drove back and forth between the two cities. The 401 highway became a familiar and monotonous route that lasted six hours or more, depending on the traffic. My particular auto-commute thus encompassed a range of commutes, from rush hour to long distance or extreme. I have not done the archetypal Monday to Friday rush hour highway commute, and I'm glad not to have to. Traffic in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is ferocious.

Driving can be seen as the form of mobility to have the most impact on both the collective popular imagination and the built environment. This chapter explores both the material and the imaginative impact. Certainly, there is no disputing the car's influence on the material city. As John Urry notes, over "one billion cars were manufactured during the last century. There are currently over 700 million cars roaming the world" (2004, 25). Large areas of the world are now devoted to car-only spaces, from highways to parking lots. For instance, "one-quarter of the land in London and nearly one-half of that in LA is devoted to car-only environments" (Sheller and Urry 2000, 746). Cities have become paved over with parking lots, highways, parking garages, streets and driveways. Automobile-dependant sprawl has taken over much valuable farmland. Malls and suburbs have sprouted all over the country with the same stores

and the same aesthetics. These non-places, more and more, have become the settings for everyday life.

Everywhere in the world, non-places are the same – in essence, if not in detail – part of the homogenizing forces of modernism and global capitalism (Augé 1995). They are also depicted through very similar narratives and representations, as archetypes or clichés, as much in one's imagination as actual experience. As a setting in films, the suburb, for instance, has served as a symbol of bucolic idealism in the 1950s, but almost immediately afterwards became a place of mediocrity and suffocating conformity as well. The highway is often the setting for dystopian science fictions or post-apocalyptic fantasies. When I am driving on the 400-series highways in Southern Ontario at rush hour, I am reminded of these narratives. This is where thinking about non-place settings through the machinations of genre is useful. Highways, suburbs, and shopping malls are like genres in literature or cinema. They have their own meanings that rely less on the specifics of a place than the internal logics of its own form, with its own rules, tropes and motifs.

Yet, the specificities of place do matter, even in non-places, which, as Augé points out, do not exist in pure form. The details are what distinguish any non-place, to make it a successful part of infrastructure or a money-sucking failure; contexts are important as placemakers, especially for non-places. If a non-place can be mapped or localized, the context, details and stories can then begin to emerge, the specificities of culture and history. Chronotopes function as mythic or metaphoric frameworks that can be completed with details by the individual in specific locations. It is this ability to focus on genre and to allow "readerly" (à la Barthes) interpretations that I suggest the chronotope as an intertextual, multimodal tool for the mapping of imagined landscapes. In this chapter, I apply Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope as a narrative lens on the auto-commute. I look at the semiotics, poetics and mythic elements that can be found in centrifugal non-places, particularly the highway and the suburb where driving occurs most often. Chronotopes gather all sorts of narratives, tropes and representations, and can be completed through the use of specific locations, times and perspectives. For instance, the chronotope of the road always involves mobility and encounter, but the meanings of the road are different in the 1960s and in the present day. The places the

road travels through also affects the completion of the chronotope in different ways. By looking at how non-places associated with driving and the auto-commute are represented in cinema, what kinds of narratives and genres are used and how they represent the historical contexts, the impact of the car on the popular imagination can be traced. The links between place and space as stories-so-far can be made more apparent. My aim here is not to seek or explain a causal relationship but to identify and understand the layers of meaning and narrative that help to shape and transform the built environment of the highway and thoroughfares that connect and divide cities, suburbs and countryside.

Approach: chronotopic analysis

Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope – literally meaning "time-space" – is laid out in his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes towards a Historical Poetics" (2002). The chronotope is useful for analysing literary and artistic works that fuse "spatial and temporal indicators" into concrete manifestations where "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history" (15). Other writers have since used the concept in many different ways, but here, I am adapting it as an indicator of the "genres" associated with a place. How do experience and representation influence and co-constitute each other? To look at a place as genre requires some knowledge of the rules and tropes of the genre.

The chronotope was first used by Einstein in his *Theory of Relativity*, but Bakhtin states that "for our purposes we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely)." It is the organizing center for "fundamental narrative events... The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (22). Several writers have extrapolated this usage to other areas such as film studies and geography. Michael Chanan, for instance, looks at the chronotope in genre and documentary film, noting that according to Bakhtin, genre is characterized by the chronotope, as it organizes and expresses distinguishing features in time and space. In another essay entitled "Place, voice, space: Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical landscape"

(1990), M. Folch-Serra extends the chronotope to a discussion of geographical inquiry, beginning with chronotopes as traces of events that shape locality and as contingencies governing events that are inseparable from space (measured by distance and proximity). This means the specificity of a location (and a chronotope) is always rooted in the social, historical and geographical expressions found within a particular time and place. The analysis of a location or landscape is not systematic and indeed, "brings to light differing, even contradictory, ways of interpretation." Some examples of chronotopes include encounter, the road, and the threshold. Another chronotope, that of "at home," organizes the point of view and gives scales of comparison between the native country or culture and "alien countries and cultures" (1990, 255-256).

Chronotopes thus organize elements of place, time, narrative and imagery into genres, stereotypes, clichés, metaphors, as well as points of view and ways of thinking. A prime example of a place-linked genre is explicated by Edward Dimendberg, who shows how film noir coincided historically with the fading of concentrated centripetal urban space and the rise of dispersed centrifugal space. In his book *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity* (2004), Dimendberg gives a sustained and thought-provoking account of how the terms centripetal/centrifugal described changes in crucial spatial, social, and narrative patterns in American cities during the first half of the twentieth century, focusing particularly on New York and Los Angeles. He frames film noir as not only reflecting and representing these patterns, but influencing and contributing to their development, arguing that "film noir needs to be grasped not simply as a body of films but as a set of presentational conventions and spatial tropes" (12). This could also be seen as a chronotope of film noir, as it refers to a very particular time-space and genre.

This chapter aims to seek out some chronotopes of the auto-commute as it is represented through cinema. Because a chronotope places equal emphasis on both time and space, time-based media forms such as film and video naturally capture and express its traits. In the most formal sense, the car's windscreen frames the landscape into a wide travelling shot (this occurs for other modalities of travel as well: the bus, the train). Friedberg (2002) relates this to the "trope of the window" in architecture and cinema, and more generally to "framed visuality." The automobile in particular, she argues, is a viewing machine through urban space (184), which she explores in relation to the

virtual mobilities of cinema/television. She brings in Paul Virilio: "What goes on in the windshield is cinema in the strictest sense" (185), and Jean Baudrillard: "The American city seems to have stepped right out of the movies… To grasp its secret, you should not then begin with the city and move inwards towards the screen; you should begin with the screen and move outwards towards the city" (186). Cinema imagines the city in certain ways that become engrained in how one thinks. Cinema can replay time and space, the unity of which as Bakhtin points out is "exhibited with exceptional precision and clarity" in the chronotope of the road (98). The chronotope of the auto-commute is not the same as that of the road, though there are naturally some overlaps, as I shall explore further on.

A chronotopic analysis begins with the screen by looking at genre movies that are set in a specified location, whether it be at the scale of the city, neighbourhood, or street. This practice can be seen to align with a range of cinematic cartography practices. Cinematic cartography can be concerned with plotting movie locations or movie theatres and other data dealing with the production and consumption of films, as well as mapping the movement of the narrative. It is useful to know a film's particular geography, as shown on a map, in order to locate the action. However, in order for this map to mean anything, it is important to understand the geography of the place, to find out why and how a location affects the story of a place. Robert Macfarlane (2007) describes what he terms "story maps" and "grid maps" as the difference between imaginative and functionalistic. Story maps are "forms of spatial expressions that embody our personal experiences of the environment and contribute to creating a deep understanding of places" (142), whereas grid maps claim a "scientific" view purports to be "objective." Here, although I begin with locating various films in their cities, I am really interested in the "story maps" of places through cartographic cinema, which is differentiated from cinematic cartography as the visual description of space as a time-based media form. Tom Conley, in his book *Cartographic Cinema*, contends that "[e]ven if a film does not display a map as such, by nature it bears an implicit relation with cartography" (2007, 1). How the space is described visually within the story or themes of the film can tell us a lot about the story-map of a place.

This essay looks at the story-maps of the auto-commute as layers of overlapping and interlinked chronotopes, each with a different set of familiar tropes, popular images and clichés of experience, but with rules that add up differently for everyone. My accompanying creative research project could be seen as an attempt to materialize some of these chronotopes in the form of a "time-space" map. *Superhighway Suspense Movie* incorporates the strange, frozen-in-time cartographic cinema of Google Street View, with a drive down the highway referencing what for many in Hamilton will be a very familiar route. The soundtrack summons up fragments of movie tropes and stereotypical genres mashed into a disjunctive time-travel loop, in an eerie yet poetic evocation of the dystopic non-places of the highway. The auto-commute has a bad reputation, certainly, which forms the basis of its occurrences in media mainly as traffic jams. It begins, however, in the chronotope of the car, the basis for much of modern life.

Chronotope of the car

> The mistake made by all urbanists is to consider the private automobile (and its by-products like the motorcycle) essentially as a means of transportation. Such a misconception is a major expression of a notion of happiness that developed capitalism tends to spread throughout society. The automobile is the centerpiece of this general propaganda.
>
> – from "Situationist theses on traffic," Guy Debord ([1959] 1996, 81)

My first car was a 1979 Chevrolet Malibu from my dad, given to me at the age of 17. In the oil-rich boomtown of Calgary, Alberta, where I grew up and where I learned to drive, you can get your beginner's at 14 and your full-fledged driver's license at 16. Learning to drive is a rite of passage where I am from. The Chevy Malibu (though not MY Chevy Malibu, which was a four-door sedan) was cool to me because it was the car featured in the punk rock movie *Repoman* (Alex Cox, 1984). I was, at the time, what I thought was very punk rock. *Repoman* was set in L.A., and L.A. was, as Friedberg points out, the quintessential car-centric city. Like L.A., the suburbs of Calgary, which arguably make up most of the city, are connected by highways and often there are no sidewalks and poor

public transit (I will be returning to the suburb shortly). Simply, some places are made for the automobile. If one lives in a new suburb, a small town or out in the country, a car equals freedom.

The image of the car as the epitome of cool is reinforced constantly in popular culture: "Fun fun fun 'til her daddy takes the T-Bird away" by the Beach Boys; Prince's "Little Red Corvette"; Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*; nearly the entire road movie genre, including Canadian director Bruce McDonald's early (1989-1996) rock and roll road trilogy (*Roadkill, Highway 61, Hard Core Logo*), which to me remains some of his best work in a spotty career. These were some of my cultural influences growing up. By the time I was 25, I'd driven across Canada and the United States half a dozen times, east to west, north to south, and back. There's nothing like hours of in-between-time, the countryside rolling by to your favorite driving music. This is the feeling that is being sold: "This sense of freedom of movement, the pull of the open road, the expectancy of new experiences, all are central to the advertising and consumer culture images of car travel. They speak to many people's actual experiences and hoped for potential of the car" (Featherstone 2004, 13). But as Mimi Sheller in "Automotive Emotions" points out, cars are associated with a whole spectrum of feelings: "the pleasures of driving, the outburst of 'road rage', the thrill of speed, the security engendered by driving a 'safe' car and so on…Cars are above all machines that move people, but they do so in many senses of the word" (2004, 221).

The automotive hard sell begins in childhood. I see it with my young son, who loves anything on wheels, despite our best attempts to push a wide variety of toys on him, including dolls and kitchen sets. He did like to chop plastic vegetables, but he adores his Hot Wheels cars. He also loves his trains, airplanes, buses, and anything that moves. This seemingly innate attraction to motion is reinforced by so many movies and television series, from the Pixar movie *Cars* (2006), to *Speed Racer* (a Japanese manga and anime show as well as an under-rated Wachowski siblings spectacular in 20008) to *Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5* (2009-2011) as an animated fantasy adventure series. There was an earlier *Hot Wheels* series that aired from 1969 to 1970, notable for the involvement of the American Federal Trade Commission who deemed it no more than a "thirty-minute commercial interrupted by shorter thirty-second commercials" and then

moved to regulate "Program-Length Commercials" for the next 13 years (Carlson 1986, 58). Now, no such regulation exists and movies such as the *Transformers* franchise (cars that turn into robots!) are basically feature-length commercials.

Some cars have become iconic. There are, evidently, over 50 songs featuring the Ford Mustang, from Wilson Pickett's "Mustang Sally" to Chuck Berry's "My Ford Mustang." Serge Gainsbourg's "Ford Mustang" with Brigitte Bardot is basically a breathily intoned list of American goods: *Un barre de chocolat/Un Coca-Cola… Un flash, un browning/ et un pick up/ Un recueil d'Edgar Poe/Un briquet Zippo… Une photo d' Marilyn/Un tube d'aspirine… On s' fait des langues/En Ford Mustang/Et bang!* The French New Wave was famously influenced by and paid homage to American culture, Hollywood movies in particular. In post-war France, the car was seen as a fascinating and yet contested symbol of American consumerism. Roland Barthes begins his essay "The New Citroën" (1957) by saying that "I think cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals…consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object" (95). He writes rapturously of the Citroën and the turn from the "alchemy of speed to a relish in driving," and how the car has become a fetishistic object, a symbol of "petit-bourgeois advancement" (97). David Inglis, in "Auto Couture: Thinking the Car in Post-war France," argues that Barthes, along with Jean Baudrillard and other French authors in the same time frame, can be seen as "foundational figures in the development of theories as to the dynamics of car culture" (2004, 198). Whether fervently embraced by modernist architect Le Corbusier, or regarded with hostility by theorists such as Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord, there was no doubt that the car was changing the built environment as well as the very time and space of society.

The chronotope of the car incorporates these many layers of significance and more. It can invoke status and a consumerist viewpoint, freedom and luxury, yet it is a "coerced flexibility" (Urry 2004, 36) that is dependent not on the timetables of public transit but on the rhythms of traffic and the geography of sprawl. Automobility has made possible the division of work and home, for areas of business and industry to be located far from residential districts, and thus has shifted time-space structures away from city centers and public transportation towards a "global form of 'quasi-private' mobility"

that "reorganizes how people negotiate the opportunities for, and constraints upon, work, family life, leisure and pleasure" (Sheller and Urry 2000, 739). Cars give the freedom of flexibility to travel at any time and anywhere that road networks allow, yet these systems of automobility necessitate driving, and "disables those who are not car-drivers (children, the sight impaired, those without cars) by making their everyday habitats dangerously non-navigable" (744). In places built for cars, to not have one is to be marginalized, left by the side of the road.

Naturally, the car fits within the classic chronotope of the road and the genre of the road movie, perhaps the most American genre that develops from the chronotope of the frontier and the genre of the Western (Cohan and Hark 2002). The chronotope of the road is manifest in the American road movie, a genre that embodies the link between time and space in the formula "time spent means ground covered," (Ganser, Pühringer and Rheindorf 2006, 3) and that also overlaps with the chronotope of encounter. The road is where people meet by chance, as paths cross accidently and social distances of class and race collapse. However, although the auto-commute springs from the car and its associated freedom, it manifests as the exact opposite of the road movie. It is the natural conclusion of car culture gone wrong. It connotes rote and routine, frustration and gridlock rather than adventure or travel. Indeed, the first thing that one often thinks of when the auto-commute is mentioned, is traffic.

Traffic jams and superhighways

During those times that Joe and I were driving back and forth between Hamilton and Montreal, we had our routine that was aimed at trying to avoid traffic. We left Montreal around 9:30AM usually, which meant just getting through the tail end of rush hour while leaving the city. We calculated about 5 hours to Toronto, hopefully getting through before the rush hour began there. We almost always hit the traffic. Once, on a holiday weekend, it took three hours to drive what was normally a one hour stretch of highway.

Nearly everyone has experienced it, heard about it on the radio through traffic reports, or seen it in the mass media, and there are numerous examples of the traffic jam in movies. As David Gartman (2004) notes, "in the United States there are already more

automobiles than licensed drivers. So the car takes over more and more of the environment, and the roads become so jammed that driving becomes an experience of frustration, not liberation and individuality. It is hard to feel like a free individual in a massive gridlock of cars" (192).

Many of the movies where traffic jams play a pivotal role in the narrative are set in Los Angeles, including *L.A. Story* (1991) with Steve Martin, perhaps the quintessential satire on L.A. culture, and *Falling Down* (1993), with Michael Douglas going berserk on every provocation he encounters, both trivial or not. Both these movies feature commuting on the L.A. freeways and car breakdowns as central plot devices. Because Martin's car breaks down, he happens to see a traffic information sign that begins to give him personal advice. Douglas is going to his daughter's birthday party to which he is not invited, when he gets stuck in traffic with a malfunctioning air-conditioner. He abandons his car and decides to walk, which becomes a violent rampage across the city. These movies show their affiliation with the chronotopes of encounter and the road, as the traffic jams work as devices to set characters off on journeys. Road rage and mental breakdowns move the plot into action. The made-for-TV movie *Gridlock* (1980) also known as *The Great American Traffic Jam*, was also set on the freeways of L.A.; here, a series of jams set different storylines in motion.

Traffic jams and highways are by now part of the story-map of L.A. in particular, but of course can be found in any large city, all over the world, as evidenced by the Italian film *Traffic Jam (L'ingorgo)* (1979) or the Japanese film *Traffic Jam (Jutai)* (1991). The worst traffic jams seem to occur in China. This is made evident in the documentary *Young and Restless in China* (2008), which looks at young adults growing up in a rapidly changing country where pressures include massive traffic jams. Indeed, the world's biggest traffic jam (so far) happened in China in 2010, with vehicles spending 12 days crammed fender to fender for a 74 mile (120 km) stretch along the Beijing-Tibet expressway, though there are other, equally impressive jams occurring semi-regularly on the 50-lane Beijing-Hong Kong-Macau Expressway (see http://www.citylab.com/commute/2015/10/chinas-50-lane-traffic-jam-is-every-commuters-worst-nightmare/409639/). An article in the Atlantic, entitled "How Traffic Jams Became a Common Movie Trope," points out the similarities between these surreal

events and Julio Cortazar's surrealist 1966 short story "The Southern Thruway," which "imagines a stoppage on an expressway through the French countryside - a sudden, phantom standstill that lasts for days, then weeks, then months, and into vast, indeterminate expanses of time. Seasons pass, and the accidental neighbors form a camaraderie borne of necessity, which eventually blooms into a tiny, isolated civilization" (Fetters 2012). Cortazar's story ends in a socialist utopia of possession-free living; in China, it was instead a capitalist dystopia where sellers of instant ramen noodles and water price-gouged their captive and desperate customers.

Is it any wonder, then, that in disaster movies, traffic jams have become common tropes as obstacles that the protagonists must overcome? Hysterical masses trying to flee the city is a common sight in films such as *Independence Day* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Armageddon* (1998), *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), *War of the Worlds* (2005), and *Godzilla* (2014). These disaster narratives and dystopian visions are not usually associated with the daily commute; however, they have certainly been evoked for me at the height of rush hour on certain sections of the 401 highway just outside Toronto that stretch across 16 lanes or more. The opening scene of the movie *Office Space* (1999) portrays the auto-commute in a more mundane and humorous fashion as the protagonist, stalled in traffic, keeps switching lanes only to have whatever lane he is in stop moving. Through portrayals such as these, the frustration, aggression, and boredom of the auto-commute is familiar even to those who don't drive.

Edward Dimendberg (2004) calls the traffic jam a fundamental lived experience of centrifugal space, and what is more, "an everyday aberration," a predictable daily event as "evidence of a social will to dispersal that returns as unwanted concentration" (202). He argues that the rise of centrifugal space coincided with the development of highways all over North America, claiming 1949 as "a pivotal year in which centrifugal spatiality decisively manifests itself in film noir…" concurrently with a dramatic increase in television ownership, the establishment of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and other new ways of understanding space (177). While centripetal space features a fascination with visible city landmarks such as the skyline, public squares, architecture and monuments, centrifugal space shifts towards immateriality, invisibility, speed, distance, the highway and the automobile, as well as superior knowledge of territory

(necessary in landscapes like the highway that lack visible landmarks). Suburbanization, decentralization and the "perceptual modality of the automobile" (as chronicled through Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles) are especially associated with centrifugal space and the valorization of speed. Chandler's stories may well be among the first to feature "automobile-framed views" prominently in their narratives (168). Centrifugal space, in films such as *Double Indemnity* (1944, co-written by Chandler and Wilder), proposes the speed of the automobile as the fundamental experience of moving through the city (173). The emphasis on the car also underscores the dependence on technology, which may fail.

Centrifugal space also implicates communication networks and the mass media, such as television and the Internet. For instance, at the same time that highways began drastically altering the urban landscape, there was a "dramatic increase in the number of television sets in American homes, from 8,000 in 1946, to almost one million in 1949, to over 10 million in 1951. By 1960, the figure reached 45 million (almost 90 percent of American homes)" (74). No longer represented through the sense of place found in the nocturnal metropolis, film noir began to include an increasingly decentralized America connected by highways, radio, television, and the "mechanics of surveillance" (210). The view of the city as a spatial and unitary realm was giving way to Melvin Webber's idea of the "non-place realm" where community "flowed from common interests pursued over a distance" rather than from proximity (214). The idea of the Internet as an "information superhighway" clearly draws its metaphoric power from automobility as a driving force of modern life.

Centripetal and centrifugal patterns can likewise be discerned in Montreal cinema. Bill Marshall, in his essay "Montréal Between Strangeness, Home, and Flow," notes that the city certainly developed along with other North American cities, in a general process of rural exodus and exponential urban and industrial growth. In addition, the first film screening in Canada took place in Montreal in June 1896, and by 1912 had "seventy cinemas attracting a quarter of the city's population on Sundays" (207). Strong connections can thus be made between cinema and urban space in Montreal, for the National Film Board of Canada was and is also based there. There are differences in Montreal's experience of modernity when compared with New York's or

LA's, mainly having to do with the unique politics of language and identity found in Quebec, but overall, centripetal and centrifugal tendencies can be seen to influence Montreal cinema in similar ways.

Arthur Lipsett's *Very Nice, Very Nice* was made in 1961, just after the end of the original American film noir cycle, and is comprised of clips gleaned from the various commercials, documentaries and educational films being made at the NFB, where Lipsett worked at the time. This short work is not a film noir, but references the period that Dimendberg is concerned with. Lipsett's film evokes a centripetal city space from its very first shots of tall downtown buildings, and a male voice intoning "In this city marches an army whose motto is…" As Dimendberg notes, images of centripetal space include characteristic urban forms such as landmarks and skyscrapers, mass transportation, crowds and pedestrians, all of which feature in Lipsett's film. However, almost immediately, the combination of a car honking and the word "NO," followed by an image of overturned cars and then a billboard with the word "BUY" on it. As Dimendberg points to the automobile as being especially associated with centrifugal space, the tensions between centripetal and centrifugal thus emerge.

Throughout this short film, anxieties are revealed about centripetal space and a new culture of centrifugality. Lipsett made the film during the very period of film noir where urban centripetal space was diminishing and centrifugal space was rising. The world Lipsett evokes seems fragmented and speed-driven, assaulted with images and advertising, filled with consumerist longing and the fear of nuclear holocaust (which Dimendberg had highlighted as a contributing factor that spread centrifugal space). Proclamations that "almost everybody has a washing machine, a drying machine" combine with advertisements of cereal, beer, and spaghetti, to hail the rise of a consumerist, spectacular society full of football, parades and rocket launches. Through all of this noise and imagery, something is felt to be missing. For instance, another man's voice is heard complaining that "people who have made no attempt to educate themselves live in a Phantasmagoria of a world" with no memories of last week or of politicians' promises. Later on, another man adds that there is no real concern, that people seem unwilling to be involved. These comments bring to mind Jameson's "disappearance of history" and "the perpetual present" (Friedberg 1993, 1-2) as well as

a growing sense of a lack of community. We see portraits of people, singularly or in crowds, but more and more they become abstracted, figuratively (as they have lost their identities) and at some points, literally (as when a glass filter warps one of the faces, or through fast cutting and optical printing). Two-thirds of the way through the film, the people, all of whom had been located in clearly urban spaces, become dislocated from settings, appearing as cut-outs in front of black space. They become centrifugal. The centripetal city makes no further appearances after this point.

The centrifugal city is one accessible mainly or only by car, made up of highways, stripmalls, office parks, and subdivisions. It is a non-place, with similar chain restaurants and big box stores all across the country, similar patterns of layout and architecture. Centrifugal forces also give rise to such technologies and communication systems as computers, the Internet, cell phones, and indeed, almost everything invented since the 1950s, which allow for the telecommute. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, in *Learning from Las Vegas,* argue that "the architecture of the highway and the thoroughfare is an architecture of communication over space; communication dominates space as an element in the architecture and in the landscape" (8). Furthermore, Tim Edensor claims that national identity is spatialized through "the thick intertextuality of these vernacular, generic motorscapes for they stitch the local and the national together through their serial reproduction across space. For instance, the American urban roadscape is surrounded by a plethora of corporate logos, of McDonalds, the Ramada Inn and Mobil Gas" (2004, 108-109). Each time I cross the border into the States, I notice the difference from the Canadian motorscape immediately, how many more billboards and road signs there are. The centrifugal city gives rise to the chronotope of suburbia, as the next section will explore.

Chronotope of surburbia

The chronotope of the auto-commute takes place in the centrifugal sprawl of suburbia. Highways make subdivisions possible. In earlier times, it was the streetcar and other forms of public transit that allowed the possibility of escape from the evils of the crowded and polluted city. Developers and architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright

advocated for suburbs, believing that the centripetal city was a blight and a source of disease (Grescoe 2012). As cities grew and cars became more affordable, auto manufacturers in the United States were known to actively encourage car-dependency in the suburbs by buying and dismantling existing tramway systems, while zoning laws enforced sprawl "through the separation of business and residential districts, mandatory large-lot sizes and set-backs from kerbs" (Shelley and Urry 2000, 746). On a large scale, in cities all over North America, post-war prosperity, technical innovation in production methods and the subsequent rise of consumerism lead to an explosion of suburban development. In the United States, the suburban dream was reflected in the earnest "family values" of postwar television shows like the iconic *Leave it to Beaver* or *Father Knows Best.*

Almost immediately, however, suburbia also became a signifier of conformity and excess, and these views exist simultaneously within the same chronotope. Already in the early 1950s, Lewis Mumford and other urban intellectuals were attacking the suburbs as "an asylum for the preservation of illusion…This was not merely a child-centered environment; it was based on a childish view of the world, in which reality was sacrificed to the pleasure principle" (Banash and Enns 2003, 2). There are, of course, those who defend the suburban life as truly populist, for many people live there because they like it (see http://www.citylab.com/politics/2014/08/overall-americans-in-the-suburbs-are-still-the-happiest/378964/). Indeed, many members of my extended family live in suburbs and they do like it. A great many television shows are set in the suburbs, though they tend toward sitcoms such as *All in the Family, The Brady Bunch* and *The Simpsons.* Television is a centrifugal technology, whereas cinema was born of the centripetal city, which is perhaps why the suburbs are hardly ever portrayed as a happy place in cinema.

Although there is nothing wrong in principle with preferring the suburban lifestyle, it is certainly less defensible in terms of sustainability. Nowadays, the suburbs are often seen as a blight in themselves and a disproportionate drain on resources, and this too is reflected in cinematic terms, where the chronotope of suburbia overlaps with the auto-commute. The trope of the subdivision, where all the cookie-cutter houses have large front lawn, driveways and garages, can be seen in a range of films from *The*

Stepford Wives (1975, remade in 2004) to *Edward Scissorhands* (1990). Each of these films uses the suburban subdivision as shorthand for conformity, routine, boredom, for going nowhere and the desire to escape. Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia* (1983) is about a teenager who runs away from his suburban home in L.A. and becomes a punk rocker. Richard Linklater's films have often been set in the suburbs, particularly his early Austin, Texas trilogy: *Slacker* (1991), *Dazed and Confused* (1993) and the Eric Bogosian-written *SubUrbia* (1996). These narratives speak to the urge of the young and bored who can't wait to leave for the big city (just as I fled the suburbs of Calgary). Other films, such as *The Hours* (2002), *American Beauty* (1999), and *Revolutionary Road* (2008), portray the emotionally barren lives of couples, especially those films set in the 1950s (indeed, that decade has become cinematic shorthand for suburban repression). Even though these films are mainly American, their influence on English Canada is dominant, and they form the sources for the chronotope of suburbia.

In Montreal cinema (as I have said, still the heart of my urban imagination), the suburbs are often stylized spaces typified by characterless and interchangeable houses on similarly identical streets, but the context of Quebec history develops the chronotope differently than in the rest of North America. In films ranging from Pierre Falardeau's *Elvis Gratton, le King des Kings* (1985) to Robert Morin's *Que dieu bénisse l'Amérique* (2006) suburbia functions as a place of comfortable mediocrity and Americanized tackiness that hides "the barren desolation of French Canadian existence uprooted from its ancestral cultural space," meaning the rural countryside (Loiselle 2010, 146). The perspective of rural Québec as the cradle of culture and nation is an important background to the development of how Montreal is represented in cinema, for the city is often contrasted in opposition to the countryside where French Canadians risk losing their identity and culture through exposure to foreign (especially English) influences.

A popular narrative features the alienated Francophone urbanite returning to the rural to rediscover the values that were lost in the busy city streets, bars, and office buildings (Loiselle 2010). Examples of this "search for roots" trope can be found in *La grande séduction* (2003), where the character of Doctor Christopher Lewis is portrayed as a "coke-snorting, cricket-playing, jazz-listening, plastic surgeon" from Montreal who discovers his "true self" in the quiet rural village of Ste-Marie-La-Mauderne, and in *Les*

invasions barbares (2003), where the character of Rémy, facing death, longs to return to the countryside around Lac Memphrémagog to find solace (Loiselle 2006). Denis Arcand's *L'âge des ténèbres* (2007) also follows this archetypal fable of suburbia, featuring both the auto-commute and subdivision as central settings for Jean-Marc Leblanc, the film's protagonist, portrayed as a mild-mannered and ineffectual civil servant. *L'âge des ténèbres* could be translated as "The Age of Ignorance," though it was released in English as *Days of Darkness.* It is part of Arcand's trilogy that includes *Le déclin de l'empire américain* (1984) and *Les invasions barbares,* and indeed, the chronotope is found in the whole trilogy.

L'âge des ténèbres begins with Jean-Marc in the middle of an opera fantasy involving his dream girl and a singing prince. But this fantasy is quickly interrupted by the reality of Jean-Marc's home life, with a busy and distant realtor wife and two sullen teenage daughters. This depressing and alienated life is set in his huge suburban monster home, and in his car where he chauffeurs his two sullen and cell phone-addicted teen-aged daughters to school, then himself to catch his commuter train. He gets stuck in a traffic jam en route, surrounded by depressed and road-enraged drivers. His time in liminal space on the commuter train seems quiet, almost peaceful in comparison to the rest of his day, as there are no demands, no roles to play, nothing to do but wait to arrive. Jean-Marc arrives at the Olympic Stadium where his office at the government of Quebec has temporally relocated. The Big O or Big Owe, as it is known colloquially, is a symbol of bureaucracy and government waste. In real life, the Olympic Stadium took over 30 years to pay off, parts of it keep falling off, and its once-retractable roof had a habit of ripping or being inoperable. To top it off, Jean-Marc's job there involves telling a series of unhappy citizens that there is nothing he can do for them.

The pressures and frustrations of this life build up until towards the end of the film, when Jean-Marc goes berserk in a traffic jam, just as in so many films about societal ills and disconnection, as discussed previously. Eventually, he finds solace in his father's old cottage by the St. Lawrence river. This same ending is played out as well in other Quebecois films such as Xavier Dolan's *J'ai tué ma mère* (2009), about a gay high-school student with a single mother, growing up in the Montreal suburbs and struggling with his sexual identity. He finally retreats to his "kingdom," the old cottage on the beach

where he lived as a child. Hence, in Quebec cinema, the chronotope of suburbia also relies on the contrast of the countryside as an escape and a return to a nostalgic and pure past.

English Canada, following a more Americanized chronotope, seems less able to escape to the countryside as refuge. Peter Clandfield compares *Nobody Waved Goodbye* (1964) by Don Owen with *The Suburbanators* (1997) by Gary Burns, both in the context of slacker films as suburban criticism. Clandfield argues that Canada has traditionally played the role of "suburb" to the States in terms of culture, particularly cinema. Canadian movies take up only "two to three percent of Canadian cinema screen time and have been characterized by limited budgets and by outsiders' perspectives" (138). It is from this outside perspective that these two films are able to take an understated look at suburbia and "adapt them into forms to parody in order to indicate some of the overstatements, omissions, and ideological simplifications of dominant suburban representations and discourses" (139). Set in Etobicoke, a suburb on the west side of Toronto, *Nobody Waved Goodbye* was one of the first feature-length dramas made in postwar English Canada, and "uses the frustration and ambivalence of teenagers in the prosperous postwar suburbs of Toronto to offer a critical and ironic perspective on both Canadian identity and (North) American suburban materialism and auto-thralldom" (138). The protagonist Peter in *Nobody Waved Goodbye* has been called a Canadian "rebel without a car."

By today's standards in English Canada, the cast of *Nobody Waved Goodbye* is very white, which corresponds to the view of suburbia as homogenizing. As Clandfield notes, "visual minimization of difference and individuality tends to correspond to other forms of homogenization: often noted in both theorizations and fictional representations is that suburban developments are apt (by design and/or by more haphazard means) to recruit and group residents according to their social, economic, and cultural characteristics" (138). My chapter on the walking commute explored this idea a bit further in depth by looking at the characteristics of the Town of Mont Royal (TMR), one of Canada's first planned suburbs. This homogenizing effect is a dominant characteristic of the chronotope of suburbia.

In *The Suburbanators,* set in the predominantly suburban city of Calgary, the chronotope of suburbia plays out differently. The same themes of restless boredom prevail, but much has changed since the 1960s, especially in Canadian demographics, and even Etobicoke has become more diverse. Clandfield points out that cultural hybridity is very much a part of *The Suburbanators*, as one of the three storylines making up the plot focuses on three Arab musicians and their quest to retrieve their instruments for a gig later that evening. They speak Arabic amongst themselves, their speech remaining untranslated for the audience, invoking the potential hybridity of an environment that mixes elements of many cultures in a normalized, that is, unexotic way. Of course, the musicians run into strangers who do exoticize them, belying their ignorance of different cultures, an occurrence that is all too routine for immigrants and for people of colour in general. Clandfield argues that in an understated and irony-laden way, such representations open up the possibilities of a more optimistic, or at least a more nuanced and complex view that provides an alternative to the better known suburban tropes. Clandfield also points out that since the film takes place not in the newest subdivisions but in "matured suburbs" that were built in the 1950s and 60s, it serves as "a reminder that even subdivisions develop histories and evolutionary lives of their own" (144). Burns' later film *Radiant City* (2006) is a documentary that appears much more critical of the newest cookie-cutter subdivisions of "monster houses" at the edge of Calgary's sprawl, with little history or community but with three-car garages.

Coincidently, *The Suburbanators* was released the same year I escaped my hometown. My expectations conformed to the chronotope of suburbia in that I saw Calgary as a very boring, stifling and homogenous city that I needed to leave as soon as possible. In 2016, the city does indeed have a much more diverse character, and even boasts of electing Naheed Nenshi, Canada's first Muslim mayor who is so popular, he won the World Mayor Prize in 2014 (see www.worldmayor.com). Some Toronto suburbs such as Scarborough have become primary destinations for new immigrants and are composed of a majority of "visible minorities" (Statistics Canada 2013). This diversity is seldom represented within the suburban chronotope, which is set in the particular time-space of 1950s America, and is gradually being recognized as a historical way of seeing rather than a representation of contemporary society. Filmmakers such as

Deepa Mehta, who set *Heaven on Earth* (2008) in the suburban city of Brampton in the GTA, are creating new narratives about multiculturalism, and new chronotopes are beginning to emerge.

Each of the films I have discussed here, set in different suburbs in different cities and times, reflect something of the surrounding histories and contexts. They demonstrate how chronotopes begin as frameworks of broad-stroked narratives, and are completed by the particular time-spaces of the films. They have not changed the established narratives of the North American suburb, but by adapting them to more understated, parodic or ironic representations, they do highlight the possibilities of more complex understandings of everyday suburban life as well as its dependence on the automobile.

The driver

While I know Montreal mainly as a walker and user of city transit, I know Calgary mainly as a driver. When I moved to Hamilton, it was not until I began driving (rather than being driven around as a passenger) that I really began to understand the layout of its streets and its different neighbourhoods in relation to each other. Driving, and also looking at maps, made the connection for me between the map view on high (de Certeau's voyeur) and the on-the-streets (walker) view.

Although driving is often positioned as the opposite of walking, there are actually many similarities between the two forms of mobility. For instance, various studies have noted that walkers and drivers have better wayfinding skills and better knowledge of their surroundings than auto passengers and transit users (Mondsheim, Blumenberg and Taylor 2010). In fact, researchers found that long-time taxi drivers in London had larger hippocampi than those in the control groups, and that "the discrepancy in volume correlated roughly to the time they had spent as taxi drivers" (Vanderbilt 2006, 182). Drivers naturally cover more area than walkers and thus know more of the city, though in broad strokes rather than in detail, but both are amenable to wandering. Friedberg claims that "driving is a motorized form of flânerie," and can avail itself of the "potentials of psychogeographical drift, the situationist *derive*" (2002, 184). Walking and driving

amount to flexibility and freedom from the constraints of train and bus schedules and from pre-ordained routes, though as already discussed, this can often be a coercive type of flexibility. In addition, during the auto-commute, there is little freedom or flexibility.

Driving is, of course, also very different than walking, mainly because of technology and speed. Nigel Thrift (2007) uses Michel de Certeau's much-referenced essay "Walking in the city" as a jumping-off point for his own essay, "*Driving* in the city," where he turns to the literature of automobility to show how rich and convoluted the world of driving is. Thrift examines some of the spatial practices sketched out in de Certeau's essay in order to rework them, taking into account how "the experience of driving is sinking into our 'technological unconscious' and producing a phenomenology which we increasingly take for granted but which in fact is historically novel" (75). Automobility can also be seen as producing its own range of "embodied practices of driving and 'passengering'," a distinctive ontology that comprises a "person-thing" (80-81). Sheller and Urry note that the term "automobility" thus denotes a double sense: "On the one hand, 'auto' refers reflexively to the humanist self, such as the meaning of 'auto' in notions like autobiography or autoerotic. On the other hand, 'auto' often occurs in conjunction with objects or machines that possess a capacity for movement, as expressed by terms such as automatic, automaton and especially automobile" (2000, 1). This double sense suggests that the driving self is a combination of body and machinery, but also extends to networks and infrastructure.

The centrifugal forces of modernity that produced the highway and suburbia have also fashioned the figure of the driver, which, like the car, is often associated with masculinity, status, and the thrill of speed. The car chase and crash are other staples of Hollywood cinema associated with the chronotope of the car, which overlap and tint the chronotope of the driver. Chase sequences are central in movies such as *Bullitt* (1968), *The French Connection* (1971), *Gone in 60 Seconds* (1974, remade in 2000), *Mad Max* (1979), *The Fast and the Furious* (2001), etc. While the excitement of the car chase is not generally part of the auto-commute, one still can experience a thrill in acceleration, in changing lanes to pass a slower car, and in skillfully weaving in and out of traffic. This is, of course, assuming that the traffic isn't too bad. Because traffic often *is* bad during rush hour, the car commuter, driving home to the suburb, becomes associated instead with

varying degrees of boredom, despair and/or rage. The overlap with the chronotope of suburbia produces similar representations of isolation and alienation for the driver, set to dystopic images of the highway.

Futuristic dystopias can often be found as settings in science fiction movies such as the *Tron* or *Matrix* series, where characters are physically entangled within technological systems, and learn to control digital matter with their minds, thus enabling them to navigate systems with speed. This underlines the act of driving as a deeply technological experience. In his essay "The Driver-Car" (2004), Tim Dant points out that driving is a skill that almost anyone can learn (though not always well); if used on a daily basis, it becomes habitual and automatic. It is a largely visual ability but must be understood through the phenomenology of the whole body that is attenuated to sound, motion, and the "feel" of the car. The car is an extension of the body, or a second "exoskeleton" body that responds to one's own gestures, and has been discussed variously as assemblage, hybrid or even as cyborg, mediated by technology and windshield-framed visuality. Dant argues that what he terms the "driver-car" should be seen as "neither as a thing nor as a person; it is an assembled social being that takes on properties of both and cannot exist without both" (74). He prefers the term "assemblage" over "hybrid" (used in Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory) or "cyborg" (after Donna Haraway), as these suggest a more permanent configuration. Assemblages can be reconfigured, recombined, reassembled with different components with different results in behaviour (a S.U.V. promotes different behaviours than a Smartcar, for instance).

A more entangled melding of machine and mind in the driver-car can extend into the furthest reaches of the psyche. As sociologists Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2000) point out, there is a "sexualization of the car itself as an extension of the driver's desirability and fantasy world…Various 'coming-of-age' rituals revolve around the car, at least since the discovery of bench-seats and 'lover's lanes'. Car-sex has itself become an element of fantasy in everything from music videos to 'crash culture'" (747). Crash culture is the subject of *Crash*, the book by J.G. Ballard (1975) and film adaptation by David Cronenberg (1996). Cronenberg shifted the original setting of Ballard's novel from London to the highways around a very recognizable Toronto. The main characters are

caught up in the pursuit of any sensation that will break them out of their isolation and numb existence, mainly through the sexual fetishization of the collision. A character in the film script quotes Ballard's novel when he claims that "the car crash is 'the marriage between sex, the human organism and technology', and it should be seen as 'a fertilizing event' not a destructive one" (Brottman and Sharrett 2002, 127). Most of the car chases and collisions in Cronenberg's film occur on the Don Valley Parkway and Gardiner Expressway, while there are multiple scenes shot on the balcony of an apartment overlooking the 401-404 interchange. These settings are familiar to anyone driving in the GTHA: the concrete pillars and pylons, run-down parking lots and car dumps evoke "a coruscating vision of the horror that is to be found in the bleak everyday of contemporary life" (Brottman and Sharrett 2002, 127). The car crash is the culmination of the car chase and the road movie, the obsession with the automobile taken to its limits of what turns out to be an obsession with death and sex.

The vision of the crash accompanies the driver at all times and is amplified greatly on the highway. Indeed, crashes and collisions have become commonplace. In 2004, WHO World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention estimated that "1.2 million people are now killed in road crashes every year and between 20 and 50 million injured. It is suggested that over the next 20 years the figures will increase by 65 percent making road traffic injuries the third leading contributor to the global burden of disease and injury" (Featherstone 2004, 3). The ordinary highway accident is still gawk-worthy. Traffic will slow to a crawl as drivers rubberneck out their windows at the unfortunate.

As much as the car is an accident-prone projectile, as Baudrillard (1996) has pointed out, the car is also, paradoxically and simultaneously, a mobile place of dwelling. Although the vision of the crash is always there, the car acts as a home away from home, and a hermetic bubble of liminality made manifest in steel. Within the privacy of the car, the driver has some control over the atmosphere of the commute, such as through heating/air-conditioning, but mainly through sound: listening to the radio, playing of music or podcasts, talking on a cell phone headset. Michael Bull's extensive studies on the role of sound in the city includes a look at how commuters use music especially as a constituent part of the driving/dwelling experience, and how their personal routines transform their cars into personalized and acoustically-sealed listening spaces that are

difficult to replicate elsewhere (2004). It is this closed private space that provides what is rarely seen in representations of the auto-commute – that contrary to popular imagination, many commuters actually enjoy their commute.

This apparent mismatch between imagination and experience is noted in an article from the Toronto Star, which cites a study that found three quarters of the commuters surveyed felt more relaxed and in a better mood *after* their commutes, and that the same number of respondents prefer to be alone during their commutes ("Canadians 'relax and rest' during their commute," 2014). This correlates with the view of the commute's liminality as "gift time" (Jain and Lyons 2008) as discussed previously in the chapter on the transit commute, but also draws on the freedom and associated benefits found in the chronotope of the car. "Gift time" is rarely remarked upon in popular representations of the auto-commute, though one instance can be found in the opening auto-commute scene in *Office Space,* which features, along with the bored and the road-raged, one man singing along loudly to rap music (but locks his car door when he sees a black man selling flowers at the side of the road). This particular scene acknowledges that in fact, singing in the car is a favoured activity by many commuters (Bull 2004), though there are many more examples found in road movies (the "Bohemian Rhapsody" scene in Penelope Spheeris' *Wayne's World,* for instance). Car-singing is especially popular in the genre of the Youtube video, with many "viral" hits that feature both celebrity musicians and unknown performers (see James Corden's "Carpool Karaoke" videos, for instance). On the more downbeat side, the *Office Space* scene also shows that the privacy allowing such uninhibited behaviour can also result in isolation and detachment from one's fellow citizens, which can lead to xenophobia, racist or intolerant behaviour, a charge that is also leveled at suburbia's reputation as homogenized enclaves of whiteness.

The negative aspects of the chronotopes of the auto-commute do not outweigh the positive experiences had by many drivers, which may be one of the main reasons that automobility remains dominant. The chronotopes expose the desires as well as the fears that are evoked with many of the narratives that are story-mapped onto places such as the 401 highway or the expansive Calgarian suburbs. In everyday life, these chronotopes do not provoke any such extreme emotions, though they may colour

moments that occur from time to time as cinematic overlays on perception and memory: the way I think of Cronenberg's *Crash* when I see not just the 401/404 interchange, but any of the superhighways surrounding Toronto; how I recognize the everyday brush with a stranger's ignorance that happens to the Arabic musicians in Burns' *The Suburbanators*; or even how I like to sing in the car. It is important to understand the different layers in the chronotopes in order to find an approach to challenging the hegemony of automobility, and to find an alternative system that is sustainable as well.

The future

As I finish writing this chapter in the closing days of 2015, what many are calling a historic climate accord was just negotiated in Paris. Naturally, some are pessimistic, faced with the overwhelming change that needs to occur in moving away from fossil fuels, but to me, this moment feels hopeful. I may look back on this as naïve but as Rebecca Solnit argues, hope is necessary work that by and large takes place in the dark (2006). The Paris Agreement at the very least indicates a shift in thinking towards possibilities and alternatives. It is easy to imagine hopelessness, the end of the world. The necessary work now includes imagining a way forward, to tell different stories about the future.

So far, the chronotopes of the auto-commute have revealed remarkably static visions about the future, tending towards dystopia and disconnection, and serving as warnings about the current state of the world. Urbanists and social theorists tend to demonize the car, but while the reasons for not driving are manifold and valid, this also tends to intensify the perceived divide between walkers and drivers, the city and the suburbs. There are many reasons why people commute by car, including geography, infrastructure, personality and culture, but whether one drives or not, the car has become the background to everyday life, and needs to be understood as part of it.

The car, the highway and the suburb can be seen as foundational chronotopes of the auto-commute (as that which differentiates it from other kinds of commuting), but they are only part of the larger forces of centrifugality that have reshaped the centripetal city and made the auto-commute necessary and/or desirable for so many people. This

same centrifugal space allows me to commute between cities, in the space of communications and networks, the tele-commute. Centrifugal space overlaps in many ways with Augé's non-place, which also includes virtual space. Centrifugal forces have reconfigured urban society itself into systems of automobility, "distinct ways of travelling and socializing in, and through, an automobilized time-space" (Sheller and Urry 2000, 738). It is the epitome of the manufactured object wrought by twentieth-century capitalism, the major item of consumption after housing that also provides status. It is the single most heavy drain on environmental resources. Car culture provides "potent literary and artistic images and symbols" centered around the automobile as necessary to "the good life" as well as an enormous and powerful "machinic complex" linked to other automotive industries, including gas and oil companies, car parts, roadwork, suburban housing development, shopping malls, advertising, etc. (278-279). It is difficult indeed to imagine how to move away from automobility.

Although the urban landscape seems unchangeable, Urry (2004) argues that "complexity approaches to systems" could provide a way in which many small, interdependent and non-linear changes may shift the system into a "post-car" mobility infrastructure (33). This new system cannot be predicted, just as the Internet seemed to come "from nowhere," but Urry believes it will not be based upon previous models of public transportation that were dominant in the 19th century, because of "the self-expanding character of the car system that has produced and necessitated individualized mobility based upon instantaneous time, fragmentation and coerced flexibility" (36). People, especially in the suburbs, are used to the freedom and flexibility of their cars, and public transit is far too inefficient in areas of low population density.

Instead, based on what may be "seeds" of a new automobility, Urry envisions a transformed system based on new fuel systems, perhaps hydrogen or methanol fuel cells, and new materials such as polymer composites or carbon-based fibres that are much lighter than steel to reduce the weight of vehicles. Cars will be much smaller "micro-cars" in some sort of large-scale car-sharing network, and importantly, equipped with "smart-card" technology that would allow each driver's preferences to be saved and uploaded to personalize the car, including music, radio stations, and communication

links such as email and phone numbers. This would allow any vehicle to become a "smart" home-away-from-home, as well as facilitating convenient means of payment. In addition to Urry's suggestive renderings, we have the future possibility of self-driving or driverless cars, such as the ones currently being tested by Google (see, for instance, http://www.citylab.com/commute/2016/01/the-future-of-urban-mobility-just-got-a-bit-closer/422646/). Suburban mini-car networks could also provide links to larger, urban transportation networks, which will also be transformed to embed communications technologies and alternate fuels. A new system will likely come about through many small organizations developing new mobilities and technologies, which will hit a "tipping" or "turning" point in the same way that mobile phones changed communications systems. The steel and petroleum industry will become antiquated dinosaurs and the chronotopes of the old automobility will become truly historical, nostalgic and placed in the past, rather than the apocalyptic and dystopic futures they currently project. The necessary imagination for these perhaps utopic visions will likewise come, not through a single and new "grand narrative," as postmodern thought has done away with (or at least instilled suspicion on) such trapfalls. Rather, narratives will accumulate to provide glimpses into different facets of futures that offer alternate visions from the current chronotopes. The future of the city, in all of its realness and imagined-ness, depends upon it.

Conclusion: The Poetics of the Detour

> Like a nomadic grazer, the exploratory mapper detours around the obvious so as to engage what remains hidden.
>
> – James Corner (1999, 225)

Developing a deep knowledge of place

Before I had ever visited Hamilton, the most I knew about it was that it was a steel town, and this was the image I saw the only time I had ever driven by the city on the way to Niagara Falls. When you drive over the Burlington Bay (James N. Allan) Skyway Bridge on the east side of town, the main view is of steel factories and belching smokestacks. Indeed, this image is a historical part of the city and the way it views itself. But if you drive in on Highway 403, approaching from the west, you cross the Skyline Bridge, Hamilton Bay on your left and Cootes Paradise on your right, Lake Ontario in all its beauty. Hamilton is also known as "City of Waterfalls" with over 100 known falls, a city of "old bones" with Victorian architecture and red brick houses, the "Ambitious City" at the center of the "Golden Horseshoe" and surrounded by Ontario's "Greenbelt." These and other such facets of its identity are becoming more prominent as Hamilton moves into a post-industrial phase, banking on a culture shift that is bringing in gentrification at a dizzying pace. The city still has its rough edges and growing pains. There is as well anxiety from steel's demise, especially from longtime residents, many of them reliant on precarious steel company pensions. But there is also a certain optimism here about its future, especially from the influx of people moving in. One of the catchphrases circulating is "Art is the New Steel," though this is hyperbolic at best. And it's not like there wasn't art here before, because Hamilton boasts of a long history of artist run centres and DIY culture. However, it's true that within a five year period, an arts district sprang up downtown, and around it, hip and upscale restaurants began opening and the price of real estate began to sky-rocket. At the time of this writing, the Ontario government had just announced an investment of $1Billion into Hamilton transit, including an LRT line for the main downtown corridor. A new bike-sharing system was recently rolled out to a wildly successful debut, with many more members signing up

than was originally expected. Most people I know have cars here, but the ongoing struggle is how to get out of them. The historical steel town image is changing.

It has been two and a half years since I made the move to Hamilton, and it has taken about that length of time for me to feel the first beginnings of settling into home. Part of me has learned to feel at home wherever I find myself, a skill developed in my younger, more nomadic days as a traveller. But the other part of me, the part that still yearns for the city where I spent twenty years, has only begun to feel that I live here, that I know what this place is about. And yet another part of me wonders if I truly feel at home anywhere, if I really know what "at home" means. Transplanting roots takes time. I can only imagine how long the process would have been for my parents, for instance, as new immigrants to a new country, or for refugees and other migrants. For people who are always seen as "from elsewhere," even if we were born here, the idea of "home" can often be in flux.

I'm fortunate to have guides that help me to put forth roots in a new place. My partner, Joe, was born and raised in Hamilton, and the move is a return for him after eleven years away. He says it's taken about this long as well, two and a half years, to remember or re-learn the geography, the streets. Whenever we drive around the city, it is like taking a "what was there" tour: the places he has lived or gone to school that are no longer there, the house where his father was born, the corner store where he bought his first comic book, which streets were one-way that are now two-way… A lot has changed since he last lived here. This is the kind of map that is made when you are asked to show a friend around – a spatial story, a tour, a story map, a passing on of local knowledge. This can happen in many ways. More than once, a couple of new friends told me to read *Falling into Place* (2002) by the poet John Terpstra – one of them finally lending it to me. It's a long meditation (complete with maps and drawings) on the Iroquois Bar, a glacial feature of the geography in Hamilton that has shaped the city's history as well as the writer's experience of the city – he drives over it everyday on the way to work – and now, it is part of mine.

I'm also fortunate to have compatriots, comrades, those of like-mindedness with whom to explore this city. As part of the artist-research group Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (HPU), I have managed to investigate many neighbourhoods from many different

angles, including sensory synesthesia poetry writing, found material sculpture making, and city-image filming. With the HPU, we have conducted public walks with pre-defined constraints, propositions and texts as tools towards understanding place; we have lead events aimed at mapping the strata of a place, that is, the layers of meanings, systems, images and stories found in a location, that make it a place. This practice of event-based mapping and making is performative, relational, straddling the line between pedagogy and art. These are some of the things that have helped me to ground myself here a little bit more each day, adding layers to my cognitive map of Hamilton that was once just a simple image of a gray industrial town, not much more than a name or a point on a map.

The image of the city, as Kevin Lynch pointed out back in the 1960s, is different for each person, changing according to socio-political factors including class, race and gender. The city-image is, in part, a cognitive map, made up of layers of images and stories, different kinds of knowledge. Preferably it should be open-ended and adaptable so that the individual can continue to fill in details, to "extend the drawing." In this, the city-image is similar to Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope as an open structure, a time-space genre that can be completed by the individual (as discussed in the previous chapter on the auto-commute). Other layers of city-image include landmarks, tourist spots, appearances in media such as film and television, and the physical map that proposes boundaries, neighbourhoods, and geographical shapes. As well, there are networks, clouds, armatures, flows, and other envisionings of social or ephemeral infrastructures that make up the city.

Developing a deep knowledge of place is like the mapping of these layers, a stratigraphy that notes the way places are formed through accumulation: history, story, experience, networks, vectors, the natural and built environments. The terms "deep mapping" or "deep topography" usually refer to practices of landscape-based writing that can incorporate narratives such as oral histories and folklore, emotions and memories, although the provenance of the idea is much older (see Roberts 2016, Biggs 2011, 2010, Least Heat-Moon 1991). Recently, these concepts have been used to describe combinations of literature, illustration, radio, performance and multimedia. It is the mapping of the self within those layered spaces as well, since social space is co-constituted by and responds to bodily presence. Mapping deeply is not about discovery

of the new so much as a kind of "thick description" similar to the trialectic analysis espoused by Lefebvre and Soja. As Denis Wood points out, the use of the term "mapping" is usually metaphorical (2015). There are seldom (though not always) any actual maps involved, nothing that can be used to find a specific location. Rather, story maps are about narrative, time and sequence, whether historical, fictional, cinematic, or mythic.

Although the daily commute is the opposite of a move to a new city in many ways, they both profit from such "deep" explorations into everyday spaces. Each trip through the city adds another layer, like onion skin over the places and routes, forming one's mental archive of knowledge with which to make a map. The challenge lies in how to map not only the geography, the built environment, and the ephemeral layers that are not normally found on maps, but also in how to convey this knowledge to others – that is, how to make your own map. This is the basis for "autocartography" as a creative practice, which involves both mapping and mapmaking. Forms of art, particularly locative art, are prime examples of innovative ephemeral mapping and affective mapmaking that are both story and location.

Five years ago, in 2011, I began this investigation into my daily travel routines as a practice of mapping deeply, involving both the practice of exploring the terrain of my pathways, and the description, through image-making and poetry, of mobile experience. I investigated my walk through two neighbourhoods to pick up my son from his elementary school, my transit rides to downtown Montreal several times a week, and finally, my road trips between two cities through the lens of cinematic chronotopes. Each of these routines involved different methods of gaining deeper knowledge, from the autoethnographic and phenomenological sensing of the urban environment and trialectic analysis to the study of cinematic story-maps associated with non-places. As well, the creative process linked to this research produced very different works, each beginning from a different set of artistic research concerns that have helped to frame the outcomes.

To take a detour is to take another route, to deviate from the normal or usual way. The detour is, according to Michel de Certeau (1984), how to return to "nearby exoticism" by way of distant lands, to be a tourist in one's own everyday, routine city. But you don't need to travel to distant lands in order to detour. It is a matter of

approach, and a practice of attention. It can be virtual or mental, taking place in the imagination. In this final chapter, I summarize my investigations into the commute as a kind of poetics, encompassing a practice of mapping and mapmaking as ways of detouring. But the detour also relates to developing one's own city-image, whether as a local or a tourist. One of Lynch's final thoughts in *The Image of the City*, in "Directions for Future Research," is to suggest the study not only of images as they exist, but also how they develop: "how does a stranger build an image of a new city"? (1964, 158). My move to Hamilton has been an investigation into this question, at the same time that my writing has been about commuting mainly in Montreal, but also between two cities, through very familiar quotidian spaces. The conjunction of these two experiences has brought out some thoughts about how these practices of mapping could link the newcomer and the commuter. I conclude by developing some suggestions towards a detouring "toolkit" that aims to address some of the critical and artistic questions around practices of mobility, of mapping stratigraphically, deeply, and creatively, in both new and very familiar places.

Art and mapping as creative urban research

> The presence of the scene brings out all its presents…
>
> – Henri Lefebvre, Rhythmanalysis (2004, 24)

Artists have long investigated urban space as fertile ground for creative practices, illustrating the value of art in providing alternative ways of seeing and engaging with the city. Saara Liinamaa (2014) outlines the figure of the artist as urban researcher, classified as four different types and based on four key thinkers of modernity: Baudelaire's witness, Simmel's stranger, Freud's doctor, and Benjamin's collector. Liinamaa argues that these types represent "the conflicts, questions, and localities that arise as contemporary artists work to document, experience, heal, and archive the ever-changing terrain of the city" (1st paragraph). While each of these types brings a particular way of viewing the different characteristics of the city – "Baudelaire the contradictory nature of experience, Simmel the demands of socialability, and Freud the

dilemmas of psychical life" (3rd section) – Benjamin brings these together, combining and extending them with a kind of montage aesthetic that highlights and juxtaposes urban objects and experiences in new and forgotten relations and orientations. Liinamaa claims that image-relations are a main critical concept and central to the artist as urban researcher. My project certainly finds resonance in these types, particularly Benjamin's methodology in archive and montage, though not only through image-relations. Instead of the collector, however, I identify with his detective figure because of its association with "sleuthing," with finding clues and deducing a back story (as in a trialectical analysis). However, we have moved into an era of the post: the postcolonial, postmodern, postindustrial. There need to be more figures, more narratives, and using more than images, but all the senses and all the different spaces. How about Doreen Massey for the figure of the cartographer, with her emphasis on interrelationships and trajectories? Filmmaker Agnes Varda for the figure of the gleaner? Jane Jacobs for the figure of the new urbanist? This could be a fun game.

Indeed, mapping as a creative process is one of the most important skills to learn and to teach. As James Corner (1999) comments, "mapping is particularly instrumental in the construing and constructing of lived space… As a creative practice, mapping precipitates its most productive effects through a finding that is also a founding; its agency lies in neither reproduction nor imposition but rather in uncovering realities previously unseen or unimagined, even across seemingly exhausted ground" (211). Corner is speaking particularly about the practices of mapping within the fields of urban planning, design and architecture, but could equally describe the artist-researcher's point of view.

Corner identifies four emerging practices of mapping, each of which produce "certain effects upon perceptions and practices of space": drift, layering, game-board, and rhizome (231). While my project makes use of aspects of each of these practices (which are not, as Corner emphasizes, exhaustive, as they represent only a handful of possible techniques), I would add also cinematic mapping as an important method, as the moving image has long been associated with the circumscribing of space. As Guiliana Bruno (2002, 2006) notes, the film path describes passage through architectural space, giving the ability to read space as it is traversed, and explores lived

narrative. This is how cinema is intimately linked with urban experience and with movement through the city. Because my art practice is based in image-making, I begin here (in order to end) with "the city-image," which is not one image, but composed of many inter-related and overlapping sets of images that change in scale as necessary.

A city-image can act as a many-layered map. To illustrate, Les Roberts (xx) uses a photo-collage by artist Sohei Nishino, *Diorama Map London* (2010), to point out its many functions: *iconographic*, featuring the famous landmarks that anchor the Lynchian "city-image"; *ethnographic* in that it "frames a cartographic understanding of the city that is cultivated through embedded social and spatial practices" (6); *performative* with its "embodied semiotics" and "'spacings' of play, affect and everyday creativity" (6); *psychogeographic,* and in essence, "a map of *mobility*… a product of *wayfinding,* of situated spatial knowledge" (7); and *mnemonic*, a memory portal. Christian Jacob (2006) also points out that a map is a "mnemotechnical device that allows things emotional and existential to reappear" (235). The "anamnesic and poetic forces of toponymy" make every map a Proustian *Remembrance of Things Past*. Some cities, such as New York or Berlin, are not only simple geographical names but condensed repositories of history and cultural memory as well as birthplaces of modernity. Other places "remain silent because their name is banal," reduced to geographical existence (235) – except, of course, the places where we live. Autocartography is important for these "banal" places, for they too need to be mapped.

"Autocartography": a detouring toolkit

I have described my creative practice as a process of poetic mapping, based in the art of describing a place and its ephemeral and physical elements. It is a practice of map*making* as well, unlike many other "deep mapping" type projects, where the maps are mostly metaphorical, but could not be used to locate specific places, as Denis Wood points out (2015). In general, I am interested in the ways that everyday practices function as tactics (de Certeau 1984), how these tactics can become stories woven into the fabric of our city environments, and how these stories can be mapped out in a visual and aural space. I use cultural landscape methods of "reading" the landscape with an eye

on the material, the social and the historical, as well as photographic and psychogeographic techniques to encourage a more active engagement with one's surroundings.

I take these ideas out into the city to walk or ride with them, to locate intersections of practice and theory. This embodied engagement with the city is becoming more common with the recent popularity of walking as art practice (O'Rourke 2013). However, I'm interested not only in walking, but in all kinds of local travel and circulation through the city, and all the ways that we encounter urban public space. Thus, my urban explorations occur through various means of circulation, including walking, cycling, taking city transit, and driving, and will comprise a methodology for the gathering of raw material in the form of still and moving images, sounds, and texts. My creative research in narrative and cinematic mapping aligns with these alternative views of mapping as process and experimental ways of gaining knowledge about places and bodies; the shape of knowledge is very much influenced by the methods of gathering that knowledge as well as who is doing the gathering.

These practices of autocartography that I have developed and discussed within my own commuting routines can be mixed and matched, adapted to different forms of mobility to suit many different needs, though of course the results will be different according to each. As Friedberg suggests, "driving is a motorized form of flânerie" that maps the flows of the city from the streetscape (2002, 184). A trialectic analysis could be performed on different metro systems – Taras Grescoe's *Straphanger* (2012) does something like this. An autocartography can be done in any place, urban or rural, though cities naturally tend towards a thickening of strata.

The metaphor of stratigraphy allows the use of many diverse kinds of knowledge, and is inherently interdisciplinary. Each city has its own city-image, which can be a good place to start. However, as Susan Sontag notes, "[s]trictly speaking, one never understands anything from a photograph… Only that which narrates can make us understand" (1973, 23). Similarly, the city-image needs narrative to make sense. City narratives are ephemeral strata that can be various shades of made-up and true, incidental or mythic, scientific fact or historical fiction. They can leave traces in the landscape, or they can be invisible and in need of explication. Other ephemeral elements

such as smell, sound, and weather make up strata that are difficult to map but essential to space and place-making. Each of these main kinds of strata can be sub-categorized into smaller strata ("botanizing on the pavement" after Baudelaire and Benjamin). There is no end to the strata. Here, I sum up the main practices described in each commute in order to consider their usefulness in a detouring toolkit. I conclude with a discussion of prompts or instructions that are designed to develop the art of noticing as a process of mapping the strata of place.

Psychogeography (lessons from the walking commute)

Movement may be seen as the core element in a poetics of the commute, and historically, walking has been the main method. The Situationist dérive is often seen as a precursor to many of the practices central to alternative or artistic walking and mapping (O'Rourke 2013). The value in the dérive, as "dream-like drift through the city" as Corner notes, is that it "discloses hidden topographies within ruling, dominant structures in an attempt to re-territorialize seemingly repressed or spent ground" (235). It permits a critique from within space, rather than from outside and above (as in a masterplan), through the "mapping of alternative itineraries and subverting dominant readings and authoritarian regimes" through "the contingent, the ephemeral, the vague, fugitive eventfulness of spatial experience" (231).

Critics have pointed out the very male nature of these practices, historically, and as I have already noted, its basis seems antithetical to the routine of the commute. As well, Debord claimed his methods as objective, but surely, what is attractive or repulsive about the urban landscape differs accordingly to the kind of body you are in. A man, a woman and a child each experiences the urban landscape in different ways, which is complicated by multiplicities of other factors, including race, class, ability, and orientation – hence, there should be no singular or completely objective stance. Debord did note that the dérive was best performed in small groups, so if there was a good range of diversity within the group, there would a wider sample of experiences.

For a solo commuter, Debord's "playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects" (22) can be recouped into a detour by expanding one's sensitivities not only to the urban landscape, but to one's own embodiment,

phenomenologically and ethnographically. This is a necessary strategy in realizing the influence and impact that one's own positioning has on our environment, as well as the effects it has on us, which are different for each person. Paying attention, then, means not only the outward surroundings but the inward landscapes as well. Regardless of the type of mobility, whether walking, riding city transit or driving, my methodology is grounded in an experimental and phenomenological autoethnography that aims for awareness of my own contexts and situations, prompting me to keep looking at things from different perspectives.

The detour also derives from the psychogeography that developed from Kevin Lynch's work on cognitive mapping and city-imageability. Lynch identifies five main elements of the city image: path, edge, node, district, and landmark. He notes that because Los Angeles is especially geared to the car, it evokes the most vivid responses to paths. The visual hegemony of paths was the "key influence as the network from which most people experience their surroundings" in the other cities as well (45). Pathways are the main elements through which one connects with the city, which acts as a locus point, a hub, a meeting place of vectors, and a thickening of layers. Because paths make up the "network of habitual or potential lines of movement" through the city, they are "the most potent means by which the whole can be ordered." The concentration of habitual travel along a path, as in a transit line, will reinforce this familiar continuous image… "This is the skeleton of the city image" (96). The movements of everyday travel make the bones that hold up the map.

Although the Lynchian and Debordian methods of psychogeography have divergent aims in their original iterations, aspects of each inform the detour. Both take for granted the use of "human instruments" as tools to measure the urban landscape, and both make use of maps as indicators of ephemeral experience. While Lynch's method could offer a wider range of tools and practices for mapping the imagined city, including questionnaires and interviews, the Situationist dérive could be particularly useful as it was originally motivated by political aspirations that sought to challenge the functionalistic use of the city and the increasing spectacularization of society wrought by capitalism. This motivation, so often lost in many contemporary artistic walking

practices that derive from the dérive, could be highlighted in the detour, updated to include contemporary issues of social justice and the decolonizing of space and place.

The personal is political, still. It is more intersectional now, not just taking feminism but opening up to the multiplicities of self, of race and orientation and ability. It is something I am aware of within the social landscape, the sometimes unnerving encounters with strangers that brush up against racism or misogyny (as I recount in the chapter on the walking commute, or in my videopoem "bus doors"). To wonder about how one is responsible for others can be seen as the intimate side of social justice (my motivation for the "familiar strangers" story that is part of the *City Transit* map). This knowledge can lead to action in other ways, though further discussion lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to note that one of the contexts of the HPU's Strata-Walk has been also to tease out the hidden and ephemeral layers of place, including other names and views. Our *Victoria Street/Avenue Walk* was a participatory event aimed to highlight different ways of seeing placenames as vestiges of colonialism, and to propose strategies of decolonizing place. Our *Strata-Walk (Mile End Montreal version)* was presented in the context of Montreal Monochome IV at the artist-run centre articule (http://www.articule.org/en/event/mmiv-study-hall-day-2), with a specific theme of decolonializing knowledge production. Art and creative practices can expose the contradictory, the hurtful and the silenced and also joy, heart-ache, loss, empathy. Raising awareness is part of the work. Privilege in so many ways can blind one to difference. "Manspreading" for instance refers to the seeming obliviousness that men sometimes display with their posture, their bodies that take up so much room on public transit. The art of noticing, then, can quickly become a political awareness of space and environment. Psychogeography can thus form a central component of the detour.

Mobile media and art (taking from the transit commute)

Although the urban environment is full of clues that can be gleaned, studied and detected, there are elements of place that cannot be read or sensed from the landscape alone, or that need further textual research – histories of places, for instance. Literary and cinematic narratives connected to place are also not discernable unless there are

traces built in (for instance, the title of Gabrielle Roy's novel *Bonheur d'occasion* as a brick mural in the Metro Place-Saint-Henri in Montreal, in the neighbourhood where it was set). It is here that the idea of digital annotation is useful. One of the modes of mobile locative media (along with navigation, commercial applications, social networking and gaming), annotation refers to the geotagging of locations with texts, photos, sounds, and other media or information (Lemos 2010; Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011). With mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, networks of information about places can be nearly instantly available.

As explored with the transit commute, mobile locative media, which can include such terms as "hybrid space," "networked place," and "augmented reality," is a "new kind of social and spatial interface that changes our relation to embodiment, movement, place and location" (Sheller and Iveson 2015, 14). Commercial and navigational tools are the most common types of mobile locative media, particularly GIS services such as Google Maps that can locate you, direct you to practically anywhere you want to go, and suggest nearby stores or restaurants or places of interest. Indeed, Google Maps is becoming the dominant way of searching for, filtering and interfacing with information from the Web (Geller 2007).

The overhead grid of Google Maps, and particularly Google Earth's satellite view, relates to Castro's cartographic shape of the aerial view, in that both strive through photographic means to make accurate plans of the land from above. They both aim to make landscapes into maps as accurately as possible, and they are both associated with military uses. The aerial view pre-dates the satellite view, of course, but anticipates how science, accuracy, and representational economies (particular scopic regimes) have transformed the world into the gold of "tradeable values" (Pickles 2004, 22). The satellite view is able to take the aerial view to the extreme, framing the entire planet in its view. However, alone, such visual strategies, whether maps or panoramas, are not enough to give a full sense of place. These cartographic shapes are images that contribute to "surface" knowledge, mainly. Wood argues that so-called "thin" maps are just as rich with meaning and narrative as "deep" maps, as he has already shown with his deconstruction of a North Carolina road map (Wood and Fels 1986). All maps tell stories, and I do not wish to set up an opposition but rather a description (just as deep

and shallow waters are not opposed but descriptive of depth) of how a "deep map" can move beyond the "surface" imagery that a grid map provides (a "map" versus a "tracing"). As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) say, "make a map, not a tracing"!

The digital map does offer opportunities for expressing some of our human perspectives on places through strategies such as geotagging with comments, pictures, video and audio files. As well, APIs (application programming interfaces) and other tools are available to make map mash-ups to combine content from different sources into one interface – Google's being by far the most popular (Geller 2007). These participatory forms of annotative mapping are a potentially more democratic and "deep" approach to cartography, though the "brand" of Google can also raise the "risk of monopolistic provision," where there are basically no other providers and no alternatives, particularly in the cartographic imagination (Dodge, Kitchen and Perkins 2011, 119). However, through postmodern techniques of appropriation, Jason Farman (2011) points out the possibilities of "recontextualisation and subversion from the 'master representations' of maps" (464). He quite productively turns to notions of Debord's détournement as well as Derrida's bricolage as methods of subversion, practices quite in sync with what I call "detouring the map" (and a motivation for my hand-drawn routes over repurposed STM maps in *Detours*).

More and more artists are making work at the intersections of locative technology, movement, political awareness, aesthetics, stories and placemaking. Indeed, locative media artists were the very first to foresee the possible ways that mobile technologies (including cell phones and GPS devices) could reframe the way that people relate to space (de Souza e Silva and Sheller 2015). Mobile media art is "one of the key arenas in which emergent interactions with the embodied and sensory dimensions of place, movement and presence itself are being explored," and can be seen as connected to histories of performance art, relational art, theatre, experimental cinema, sound art and public art. It can refer to a diversity of practices, from sound walks, dérives, site-specific storytelling, collaborative cartography, or "mixed-reality" interactions, all of which engage the body, location, and digital media interface (Sheller and Iveson 2015, 15).

Some examples of mobile applications that use digital annotation to uncover histories in and around the city include *Toronto in Time* (http://citiesintime.ca/toronto/) and *Worker's City* (on Hamilton's industrial and labour history at http://workerscity.ca/). These highlight spots of interest on a map, give information in the form of texts, images and videos, and are geared toward very specific locations and histories. *Streetmuseum*, from the Museum of London, uses an app that overlays a historical image on top of the present day street scene when viewed on a smartphone's camera. These apps are great for tourists (including local tourists) but less useful for commuters who are generally travelling non-places that lack such distinguished histories. Google's *Field Trip* (https://www.fieldtripper.com/) offers contextual tidbits of information almost anywhere, which you can personalize to include or exclude such as dining, historical information, upcoming events, sports, etc., and can send push notifications to inform you if you have just passed an interesting spot. Unfortunately, there tends to be relatively little information in smaller cities and towns, or extremely local places such as a particular corner or intersection in a neighbourhood. Much work remains to be done in archiving and making available local knowledge.

One problem with visual elements such as texts, videos and photographs (that are not overlaid onto reality) is that they can take you into the screen too much, and thus end up disconnecting you from your surroundings. Annotated maps such as these can be used by walkers, who can at least stop to look down into their screens, or passengers on either city transit or in cars, where navigation and motion control is no concern. Driving requires one to be aware, to look where one is going without distractions. It seemed that an invention such as Google Glass might solve this problem, as it could overlay digital annotations and reveal layers as you looked at a material object, a building, an intersection. However, the content for such a device, as with *Field Trip*, is nowhere near developed or "mixed" for seamless integration (Madrigal 2012). A Youtube parody of the Google Glass interface shows contextual ads popping up everywhere, as *ADmented Reality* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mRF0rBXIeg). There are many more problems with this device, many of them social (perhaps encapsulated by the fact that people wearing the Google Glass device were often called "glassholes"). At the time of this writing, Google had recently announced the discontinuation of Google Glass as a

consumer product, although they are continuing its development in their labs for a future release.

Instead of visual elements, sound might be the best medium for most kinds of mobility, as it allows absorption into your physical surroundings at the same time that you allow an audio track to hybridize your experience with music, information, narrative, etc. Michael Bull (2007, 2000) has already shown how commuters, whether walking, riding or driving, often have routines involving music that "cinematizes" their experience. Many examples of locative cinema don't use screens at all. Blast Theory's work *A Machine to See With* lays out a mobile narrative of a bank heist onto the urban topography through the use of cell phones and an automated calling system. The creators talk about the city as a cinematic space, and "considered how screens might be inserted into the streets or carried through them. Our approach was to think of our eyes as the screens themselves…The title of the work is taken from Godard's script for Pierrot Le Fou in which Jean Paul Belmondo's character says, 'my eyes are a machine to see with'" (http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/a-machine-to-see-with/). Imagine if interactive cinematic experiences could be incorporated into the fabric of the city-strata in some way, that could speak to how deep knowledge, imagination and emotion can be conveyed through a hybrid cinemascape. This could help provoke attention to your practice of noticing, add layers to your personal city archive. And it could be part of your everyday practices rather than a special event, something that you listen to on your way to work.

Cinematic cartography (story-maps from the auto-commute)

Since its release in 2005, artists have been co-opting the Google Map aesthetic to question its representation of space and reality, to highlight the hegemony of digital maps. For example, some artists such as Aram Bartholl have used site-specific installations to refer to Google Map's assumptions about urban space. His project *Maps* (2006-2012) places gigantic red Google Map markers in the exact spot that the map service pinpoints as the center of the city. "Transferred to physical space the map marker questions the relation of the digital information space to every day life public city space. The perception of the city is increasingly influenced by geolocation services"

(Bartholl 2013). Other artists wander through the streets of Google Street View, looking to capture "accidental" scenes or scenery, and often coming up with extremely bizarre or even beautiful scenes. Jon Rafman's *Nine Eyes*, for instance, refers to "the nine camera lenses in the original roof-mounted spherical rig atop Google vans" (Brook 2011), and his photos include surreal people in masks, a tiger in a parking lot, fires and accidents. Another GSV photographer, Michael Wolf, won a controversial honorable mention at the World Press Photo Awards for *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and offers this opinion: "I think Google should be awarded some sort of documentary photo prize" (Hoby 2012). The aesthetic of Google Street View is part of the city-image that includes the digital grid map, panoramic tourist views, landmarks, and other visual representations such as in film and television. I work with this aesthetic in *Superhighway Suspense Movie*, which was also a way to play with cinematic chronotopes of the auto-commute.

Cinematic chronotopes, those specific time-space genres as described by Bakhtin, can form layers of the city-image as well. Tourists may not have either map or tour as part of their city-images, but nonetheless have ideas about well-known places based on cinema. New York's main city-image, for instance, involves the chronotope of 1950s film noir. Montreal's city-image as a city of Roman Catholicism (as seen in my "Streets of the Saints" map), is reflected in films such as Denis Arcand's *Jesus de Montréal* (1989). The chronotope of the car is strongly evident in Thomas Anderson's *L.A. Plays Itself* (2003) composed solely of clips of L.A. in other movies. Cities like these have strong cinematic chronotopes as part of their city-images, whereas smaller cities or towns may not have any that are specific to them. Although many films have been shot in Hamilton, it rarely plays itself. Non-place-based chronotopes figure in most such places, such as suburbia or the highway. There are literary chronotopes as well as all manner of other cultural, historical identities a place may be known for. Mordecai Richler's Montreal neighbourhood of Mile End in the 1950s and 60s is a strong example. Space is imagined through an event or events taking place; space is constituted through narrative. The effect of these imagined events is real. 'This pedagogy of the symbolized city is at work as much in films, novels, and poetry as it is in architectural plans and political programmes" (Donald 1999, 123). The mapping of locations that appear in novels, films and other narratives allow for people to partake in what Thierry Joliveau calls "set-

jetting," a tourism practice that has grown exponentially in recent years (2009). This attests to the power of cinematic approaches to evoke emotional, political and personal dimensions of a place, contrasting with the scarcity of those dimensions in cartographic practices (Caquard and Taylor 2009).

Alone, visual strategies, whether maps or panoramas, are not enough to give a full sense of place. They are tools for the mapping impulse to describe space, and to open the way for the tour, for narrative, (auto)biography and history, which deepen the picture. Spectacular and well-known destinations remain tourist clichés without contexts, local points of view and narratives, while more mundane places remain simply abstract points on a map that hold no meaning without a deep human perspective. The cartographic cinema approach can thus function as a tool that combines the visual strategies with place and narrative strategies, making way for the cinematic detour.

Prompts and participatory events

To develop an ongoing practice of detouring is a progressively political act that frames locative situations as "a form of alternative construction and engaged relation with life, a relation that people can define and not just passively consume" (Aceti 2015, 12). The Situationists advocated works that "increased public consciousness and promoted direct action and systematic participation in everyday life" (Corner 231). They were less interested in art objects and aesthetics than with provoking situations and disrupting the dominant regime. Fluxus artists used "open-ended scores" for all kinds of events, including games, actions, paintings, and walks (O'Rourke 2013, 76). Yoko Ono's *Map Pieces* include instructions such as "Draw an imaginary map. Put a goal mark on the map where you want to go. Go walking on an actual street according to your map" (qtd. in O'Rourke, 77).

Similarly, the detour also acts as "an open model, a set of procedures or a toolkit with which participants construct their own situation to be 'lived' independently of the artist." (McGarrigle 2009, 57-58). Based on various relational and process-oriented artistic works and approaches, the items in this "toolkit" are suggestive, encouraging the user to develop personal and creative routines for everyday travel. In attending to the spaces of everyday travel, I hope to speak to the importance of developing a creative

practice that engages with the mundane aspects of the quotidian. The revolution of everyday life – proposed by the Situationists, the Surrealists, and Fluxus, for instance (Waxman 2010) – is a project that I can get behind.

Detouring as a practice might involve a focus on the mundane, on the phenomenological, on the imaginative, and on all the bodily senses in addition to, or instead of, the visual. During the commute, routine can dull the senses and the impetus to detour, but the use of prompts and instructions can be an extremely useful tool. For instance, Lynch's psychogeographic method involved interviews and questions that included asking for explicit directions "for the trip that you normally take going from home to where you work. Picture yourself actually making the trip, and describe the sequence of things you would see, hear, or smell along the way, including the pathmarkers that have become important to you" (141).

Similarly, the "Strata-Walks" given by the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (see http://hamiltonperambulatoryunit.org/projects) urge you to identify different layers of strata as a way of provoking your attention, and can be adapted to any method of mobility. As participatory workshops, the Strata-Walks function as public pedagogy and relational art, where the emphasis is on the inter-relationships between people and environments, and the creative element does not lie in the making of an object, but an event. The prompts can also be used in groups, or the solo commuter, the newcomer to a city, or the tourist. As a method, it focuses on sharpening the mind's attention to place, as well as the body's. It is optimal for routine and daily movements through the city, for one could focus on different strata to map on different trips. Here are some examples of our Strata-Walk prompts:

> *Signed Strata*: Identify texts and the systems they belong to (street signs - civic, colonialist; advertising - capitalist; graffiti - poetic or interventionist etc.) Why is this street named its name? Did it ever have another name? Should it?
> *Cinematic Strata:* What are the movie clichés overlaying your city-image? What movies or stories affect how you see place?
> *Vector Strata:* Map your movements through the city. Where are your main corridors? How much of the city do you cover?

Rhythm Strata: What is the rhythm of the day when you move through place? Are you in rush hour or is it slow? What is the weather, the rhythm of the seasons? What other rhythms can you sense where you are?
Speculative Strata: Map what the street could be. Revamp it according to your imagination.

Another example of an instructional toolkit is the "Travel Remedy Kit" by Watts and Lyons (2011), described as "interventions into train lines and passenger times" (104). It consists of a series of cards that urge the traveller to investigate time during the trip as "viscous," as "boredom," "transition," or "gift," or to consider the route and alternative routes, to get fresh air somehow, or to consider how you make the space around you through the placement of the self or belongings. It is aligned with autoethnographic methodologies rather than artistic-relational ones, though there are certainly overlaps in the focus on heightened attention and the art of noticing.

There are mobile media apps as well that can act like prompts to get one out of the usual routine. With names such as *Dérive* (http://deriveapp.com/s/v2/) and *Drift* (http://www.brokencitylab.org/drift/), these apps consciously reference the Situationists and their games of chance. *Dérive*, for instance, is a web-based app, meant to be accessed on a smartphone or tablet, and works by randomly selecting a series of "cards" that give instructions such as "spot someone who's got a sad countenance. Move away in the opposite direction." For those who have definite start and end points to their travel, such as "Home" and "Work," the apps *Serendipitor* (by Mark Shepard, part of his *Sentient City Survival Kit*) and *Indeterminate Hikes* (by Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint) may be better suited. Instead of giving the quickest or straightest routes, these apps draw random routes that are meant to break one's normal routine. *Serendipitor* also allows you to specify "more" or "less" complicated routes, while displaying the length and distance of the route. These apps also feature game-playing aspects, giving directions as you move along the routes. *Serendipitor* might ask you to "find a dark alley and walk down it. If there are no dark alleys, close your eyes." Similarly, *Indeterminate Hikes* specifies certain points where it advises you that "You are standing in the wilderness of the everyday. Take a picture of something wild." Such techniques and

practices are useful to both the commuter and the newcomer in defining a practice of detouring.

Possibilities

In the context of the commute, each chapter in this thesis explored a different kind of mobility, with different approaches and paths. During the walking commute, I began with the urban landscape, the built environment and city planning, as read from the route of my pathway, and through the lens of my camera. The liminal bubble of the transit commute proved to be an excellent place from which to map social strata as well as hybrid and networked mobile spaces, especially through locative mobile media art. The chronotopes of the auto-commute form more strata through the images and narratives in cinema. My project makes use of aspects of each of these practices (which are not exhaustive, as they represent only a handful of possible techniques) as tools for deeper knowledge. Indeed, maps cannot be exhausted, if an expanded view of them is taken.

Michel de Certeau argues that a map, no matter how detailed or accurate, cannot capture the true essence of a place, because lived space is composed of passages through a place, of movement, encounters and memories, of which only traces are left. Much of the art that contests the authority of the grid map relies on these traces to evoke movement and memory, in line with Lynch's remark that "image is not solely the result of external characteristics but is a product of the observer as well" (158). The locative art projects and practices discussed here attempt to foreground a view of mapping as relational, as processual, performative and affective, through focusing on poetics, narratives, actions, networks and trajectories. "The 'relational turn' across many art activities and creative disciplines favors methodologies that are interactive, process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented, and open in Eco's terms" (Sheller and Iverson 2015, 16). Art can show what is difficult to describe, and it can transform the usual, even seemingly exhausted routine commute into a detour.

Massey (2005) looks at "travelling imaginations," especially pertinent since the map inherently invokes travel. She asks "What is it to travel?" and "How can we best think it in terms of time and space?" (117). For one does not just move through space or

across it. Since space is relational and social, one also helps to alter space, co-constitute it, participate in its production. This kind of space emerges from interaction, as spheres of multiplicity that are open and ongoing. It recognizes that the process of the constitution of identity goes beyond binaries, similar to the postcolonial theory of hybridity, as advanced by Homi K. Bhabha (1995) – to find a space of "international culture, based not on exoticism or multi-culturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity… And by exploring this hybridity, this 'Third Space', we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves" (209).

The goal of the detouring commuter is to move within the local/other discourse to an informed and contextualized "Third Space," as described by Bhabha and as formulated by Soja as well. It requires an attitude of attention and openness that transforms even the daily routine. It requires imagination. "Travel (like walking) is a substitute for the legends that used to open up space to something different" (de Certeau 1984, 107). Travel as a creative mapping practice allows the possibility of detour, which, if taken, directs the traveller towards a radical re-visioning of commuting (and touring as well). As Trinh T. Minh-ha (1994) notes, travelling "can consist in operating a profoundly unsettling inversion of one's identity" (23). This can happen on a small scale within daily travel, but imagine the possibilities if such autocartographic practices became the norm. In this process where self and other lose their fixed boundaries in the liminality of the journey, detouring the commute can thus become a potentially empowering practice of everyday life and the ongoing exploration of the place called home.

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